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National and International Labour Migration

A Case Study in the Province of Batken, Kyrgyzstan

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Irene Rohner

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dialogue

Collaborating Institutions

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Cover Photo

Wives of migrants in Sai (above), street in Boz Adyr (below) and walking to the public bus station in Boz Adyr (right) (Photos: Rohner 2004).

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Glossary[1]

Aiyl (kyrg.)	Village – the smallest administrative and territorial unit of the Kyrgyz Republic
Aiyl bashy (kyrg.)	"Head of the village", village authority – responsible for the management of local social activities and social services for a specific community
Aiyl ökmötü (kyrg.)	Federation of different villages to one municipality
Aksakal (kyrg.)	Regardful salutation for an elderly respected man. Literally it means "white beard" in Kyrgyz language.
Bak (russ.)	Garden
Banya (russ.)	Bathhouse
Jailoo (kyrg.)	High mountain pasture areas, which belong to the village
Jogorku Kengesh (kyrg.)	National parliament – the highest legislative organ of power in the Kyrgyz Republic composed of two assemblies: the Legislative Assembly (60 deputies), and the people's Representatives Assembly (45 deputies). Some 15 seats in the Legislative Assembly are held by representatives of political parties that have received 5% or more of all votes cast during the last elections.
Kolkhoz (russ.)	Collective farm
Kys-toi (kyrg.)	Marriage of a daughter
Mahalla (kyrg.)	Neighbourhoods
Mazar (kyrg.)	1. holy place, shrine, 2. graveyard, grave
Moldo (kyrg.) or Mullah (kyrg.)	Priest
Murab (kyrg.)	Villager, whose duty is to carry out the distribution of water for the households in the village for drinking and irrigation
Oblast (russ.)	Province – the largest administrative and territorial unit in the Kyrgyz Republic relating to regional territorial division (7 Province in Kyrgyzstan: Talas-, Bishkek-, Chui-, Jalal-Abad-, Issyk-Kul-, Osh-, Batken *oblast*)
Posobie (russ.)	Financial assistance (mainly child allowances and pensions)
Propiska (russ.)	Residence permit
Rayon (russ.)	District – the next basic administrative and territorial unit after the *oblast* in the Kyrgyz Republic relating to regional territorial division, 43 Rayon in Kyrgyzstan
Rubl (russ.)	Currency of Russia, 1.49 *rubl* = 1 *som* (June 2004)

[1] Many possible systems for transliterating the Cyrillic alphabet of the Russian language to English exist. In this Glossary it is transliterated according to the Library of Congress (Library of Congress, American Library Association, Randall 1997). Kyrgyz and Russian expressions together are listed alphabetically.

Som (kyrg.)	Currency of Kyrgyzstan, 43.26 *som* = 1 USD (June 2004)
Sotka (russ.)	1 sotka = 100 m^2 = 1 are
Sovkhoz (russ.)	State farm
Sünnöt-toi (kyrg.)	Circumcision (life-cycle celebration)
Toi (kyrg.)	Life-cycle celebration
Üi-toi (kyrg.)	House warming (life-cycle celebration)
Ülönü-toi (kyrg.)	Marriage of a son (life-cycle celebration)
Ülüsh (kyrg.)	Privatised land after independence. Literally it means "land share" in Kyrgyz language.

Abbreviation

CAMP	Central Asian Mountain Partnership
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DFID	Department for International Development
GDC	German Development Cooperation
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IRIN	United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks
NCCR N-S	National Centre of Competence in Research (North-South)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RF	Russian Federation
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

Table 1: Discount Rate of Foreign Exchange, June 2004

Name of the currency		Rate to *som*, the Kyrgyz currency
US Dollar	=	43.26
Russian *rubl*	=	1.49
Swiss Francs (Rappen)	=	34.40

1 Introduction

Kyrgyzstan declared its independence on 31st August 1991 after having been under Soviet rule for more than 70 years. The process of transition had a drastic effect on industry, trade, land property rights and rural infrastructure. In recent years the per capita gross national product has decreased from over 800 USD (1992) to 270 USD (2000)[1] (Trautner 2002). According to World Bank (2004) data, more than half of the population of Kyrgyzstan lives below the poverty line.
In the early years of transition as awareness of the new border systems grew and national identities became stronger, mass emigration and immigration of ethnic groups within the former Soviet Union countries took on considerable proportions (Schuler 2004). The political and economic conditions in Kyrgyzstan and the consequent increase in poverty led to internal migration from the remote areas and villages to the towns and cities. Recently, a completely new migratory trend for the Republic of Kyrgyzstan can be observed: external labour migration, above all to the CIS countries of Russian Federation and Kazakhstan (IOM 2005). The motivations to migrate include their common recent history and language, the lack of visa requirements, a growing Kyrgyz diaspora in countries such as Russia and Kazakhstan, and the fact that relatives and friends are working there (Interview, Bishkek Centre of Social Initiatives, 2004). Furthermore, the main reasons causing people to emigrate are their expectation of a higher salary and the stable demand for foreign workers in the destination countries (Moiseenko et al. 1999; Vitkovskaya 2004). However, migration in Kyrgyzstan is now responding to increasingly open borders and has expanded beyond the CIS to the rest of the world. Since the socio-economic and political situation in Kyrgyzstan is unlikely to change in the near future, migration will remain a promising livelihood strategy, especially for people in rural areas.

The recent appearance and growing dimension of labour migration is widely discussed in the media, thus showing the importance of this topic for Kyrgyzstan. However, to this day, hardly any research has been carried out on the subject of international labour migration. Therefore, this paper focuses on two case studies at village level in order to illustrate the real scale and impact of labour migration. This working paper summarises the results of my Master's Thesis[2], which was based on ten weeks of field research in the summer of 2004 on the border of the Ferghana Valley in south-western Kyrgyzstan, to be precise in the province of Batken.
Irrigated agriculture is the main economic activity in the province of Batken, one of the Kyrgyz provinces with the lowest per capita income. With a young and rapidly growing population in a region with limited arable land and water for irrigation, the province faces tremendous demographic pressure (Slim 2002). Unemployment is high and work

[1] Values are not adjusted to the purchasing power parity (PPP).

[2] Rohner, I. (2006): National and International Labour Migration. A Case Study in the Province of Batken, Kyrgyzstan. Master's Thesis, Department of Geography, University of Zurich. More information on: www.nccr-north-south.unibe.ch/Person/person.asp?contextID=2&Context=WP&refTitle=WP2&ID=776.

is poorly paid due to there being few local alternatives (Scholl 2003). Therefore, it is particularly important for families to have an alternative household strategy such as labour migration. To the best of my knowledge, no research on labour migration in the province of Batken has yet been done. The Sustainable Livelihood Approach (DFID 2004) was taken as a theoretical guideline (details Rohner 2006).
The aims of this study are to map the basic data on patterns of migration for the case study area. It is also extremely interesting to study the economic importance of labour migration for rural villages and their inhabitants. This raises the question if labour migration is an appropriate choice of livelihood strategy for households in the rural area like Batken province.
The first section of the study will focus on the national patterns of migration in Kyrgyzstan during the Soviet era and after independence. The focus of the second section is on the patterns of labour migration in the villages of Sai and Boz Adyr, as well as its social and economic impacts as part of people's livelihood strategies.
These topics are addressed through the following research questions:
Which patterns of migration are there at national level? Can migration be seen as a movement that has been shaped by and embedded in history?
Which patterns of migration are there within the study area? Which household members migrate and why? Where do they migrate to and for how long? Are people's decisions and the number of migrants influenced by the exchange of experiences and information?
What is the economic importance of labour migration in household members' being able to secure their livelihoods? Who covers the initial costs of migration? How much money do migrants send back to their country of origin? What are remittances used for? Does the workload increase or the power relation change in a household in the absence of one (or more) household member?
Can labour migration be considered to be a sustainable livelihood strategy? Does labour migration contribute to the diversification of household strategies and does it help to secure the livelihoods of migrants and their families?

This study contributes to IP6 (Institutional Change and Livelihood Strategies, now part of Work Package 2) and IP7 (Environmental Change and Conflict Transformation, now part of Work Package 1) of the NCCR North-South, and is integrated into JACS Central Asia.
A main point of research of the IP6 is "Labour Migration and Rural Livelihoods". Therefore, the study allows first comparisons of the meaning of labour migration as a livelihood strategy. It will also provide insights into the potential impact of remittances and into problems such as the reduction of the labour force in the region of origin. As the study examines the meaning of labour migration for households in the province of Batken, it has also contributed to the PhD work of Christine Bichsel[1] within IP7. It is assumed that the remittances of the labour migration reduce pressure on natural re-

[1] Bichsel Ch. (2006): Dangerous Divisions. Irrigation Disputes and Conflict Transformation in the Ferghana Valley. University of Bern. Unpublished PhD thesis - draft.

sources and that they have a mitigating effect on resource conflicts. Additionally the results are of vital interest for the TPP "Sustaining livelihoods in translocal settings" by Susan Thieme within the NCCR[1], which is carrying out research on labour migration in Central Asia.

After the introduction (chapter 0) gives the second chapter (chapter 2) an outline of the theoretical framework underlying the case study and the methodology that was used during fieldwork and for data analysis. In order to illustrate the importance of migration in Kyrgyzstan and to put my case study in a wider context, I outline the historical evolution of migration during the Soviet period and after independence in chapter 3. Special emphasis is put on the latest developments in labour migration patterns in Kyrgyzstan. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 form the main empirical part, describing the case study of labour migrants from the villages Sai and Boz Adyr. Chapter 4 gives an introduction to the province of Batken and the two villages of the case study. Chapter 5 gives details on patterns of migration and in chapter 6 presents the impacts of migration for individuals, households and the villages and outlines the importance of labour migration as a livelihood strategy. The final chapter (chapter 7) contains the conclusion and an outlook for the future.

[1] More about the Transversal Package Project "Sustaining livelihoods in translocal settings" by Susan Thieme see: http://www.nccr-northsouth.unibe.ch/project/project.asp?contextID=258&refTitle=Sustaining%20translocal%20livelihoods&Context=wp&srcLink=TP&srcContext=WP&srcID=5.

2 Approach to the Study and Methods

2.1 Approach

All over the world, research has shown that migration is a common and essential livelihood strategy for rural and urban people, especially in risk-prone environments (Deshingkar and Grimm 2005; de Haan and Rogaly 2002). This is also true for Kyrgyzstan; migration is becoming a routine livelihood strategy for households, helping to ease seasonal fluctuations in income and bringing in extra cash to increase disposable income (Deshingkar and Grimm 2005, 40). Patterns of movement are determined by complex context-specific dynamics and mediated by social networks, gender relations and household structures. In any case, migration is not just an economic but also a social process, requiring social analysis to understand and explain better the role it plays as a livelihood strategy.

This is the reason the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (DFID 2004) was used as a guide for the research. It provides a language through which economic, political and anthropological views can be integrated to explain the entire process of migration. Important roles in understanding the process of labour migration are played by the situation of a household and their members at the outset (assets), the institutions which influence and shape migration (structure and policies) and the reasons for migrants' vulnerability (vulnerability context). The outcomes of the strategy of labour migration (livelihood outcomes) in the country of origin shall be emphasised (Rohner 2006).

2.2 Methodology

The case study was carried out in the south-western province of Batken. Christine Bichsel[1] has done previous research in the area while working on her PhD thesis within the NCCR North-South. After my arrival in Batken, I held interviews in different villages in the *aiyl ökmötü* of Kyshtut and Suu Bashy in order to select the villages for the in-depth research. The results also contributed to another research project within the NCCR by Susan Thieme[2].

The decision was taken to study Sai and Boz Adyr, two villages in Batken *rayon*, both bordering the enclave of Sokh. Sai and Boz Adyr were chosen as they are outstanding examples of national and international labour migration as a livelihood strategy; first interviews with local authorities had demonstrated that there was a high rate of migration and that migration was a practice with a relatively long history in the villages. Fur-

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[1] More about Christine Bichsel's research within the NCCR can be found on: http://www.nccr-north-south.unibe.ch/Person/person.asp?contextID=&Context=NCCR&refTitle=the%20NCCR%20North-South&ID=193.

[2] More about the Transversal Package "Sustaining livelihoods in translocal settings" by Susan Thieme can be found on: http://www.nccr-north-south.unibe.ch/project/project.asp?contextID=258&refTitle=Sustaining%20translocal%20livelihoods&Context=wp&srcLink=TP&srcContext=WP&srcID=5

thermore, different initial patterns of "livelihood assets" were detected in the two villages, enhancing labour migration. Finally, both villages are accessible; the Uzbek border of the enclave can be crossed at the main border-post, and is thus easier to reach than other places.
In Sai, research was conducted over four weeks in May and June 2004 and in Boz Adyr over three weeks in June and July 2004. At the beginning and in the middle of the field study, interviews were conducted in Bishkek and Osh. During data collection in the villages, I lived in a local family together with the interpreter.
For data collection, I made a triangulation of methods. Triangulation is

> *"(…) the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena" (Denzin 1970, 297 In: Flick 2004, 13).*

This method helps to prevent investigators succumbing to the subjective biases that stem from single methodologies and can partially overcome the deficiencies that can result from using one single method. Employing triangulation techniques is characteristic of qualitative research (Flick 2004, 7-13). The methodology of triangulation distinguishes between the triangulation of methods, investigator, theory and data (Flick 2003, 310), whereby it is the triangulation of methods that is most relevant for this study.
The following chapters describe the methods I used to understand the livelihoods of the villagers and their patterns of migration. These were transect walks, social mapping, household surveys, interviews and wealth ranking. Close observation of course formed an integral part of my stay in the villages. How the data was then analysed is explained in the last part of this chapter.

2.2.1 Sampling

The issue of sampling emerges at different points in the research process, be it while collecting data, interpreting data or while presenting the findings (Flick 1998, 62-63). In this research process, I opted for a gradual definition of the sample structure, mostly based on theoretical sampling Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed in their Grounded Theory. In the process of collecting and interpreting data, decisions are made about selecting and compiling empirical material (Flick 1998, 65). Glaser and Holton (2004, 10) define theoretical sampling as

> *"…the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects and analyses the data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop the theory as it emerges" (Glaser and Holton 2004, 10).*

According to Flick (1998, 67), the main features of theoretical sampling are:
- The extension of the basic population is not known in advance;
- The features of the basic population are not known;
- There is repeated sampling of elements according to criteria that are redefined at each successive step;
- Sample size is not defined in advance;
- Sampling is finished when theoretical saturation has been reached.

In theoretical sampling, neither randomness, nor stratification guarantees that a sample will be representative. Groups or individuals are selected according to the level of new insight they bring to the theory under development and in relation to the state of theoretical elaboration so far. Patton (1990, 169-81) describes strategies for how to proceed with the steps of selection and gives various suggestions for purposive sampling. The selection is done in steps for various reasons, such as deliberately extreme or deviant cases, particularly typical cases, maximal variation in the sample according to the intensity of a case or feature, extreme critical cases, politically important or sensitive cases, or simply for reasons of convenience, for instance the easiest way to access the study site. Sampling and integration of further material is complete when the theoretical saturation of a category or group of cases has been reached, i.e. when it is no longer expected that anything new will emerge.

2.2.2 Transect Walk

Transect walks from one point of the village to another are a combination of interviewing and observation, which provide visual evidence of the physical features of a village along with local people's interpretations of them. They offer an opportunity to proceed systematically with a key informant through a specific area of the research site and thereby discuss different aspects of land-use patterns, agro-ecological zones, soil conditions, crops and livestock. With local guidance, the researcher becomes very familiar with the field of interest and receives a deeper insight into the reality of the actors. While making this walk, interesting elements can be observed, discussed with the informant and put down on paper (Mukherjee 1997, 52).
The reason why transect walks were used in this research was mainly to observe the actors within their natural environment in order to understand how they perceive their environment, but also to complete the results from the social mapping in order to establish the selection criteria for the area in which to conduct the household surveys. Land was not the only topic on the transect walk, neither in Sai nor in Boz Adyr. The key persons frequently brought up historical and political issues of land distribution after the Soviet collapse, disputed lands, irrigation and so on.
In Sai and Boz Adyr, we also accompanied the *murab* (person whose duty it is to oversee the sharing of the water between the households in the village) on his daily round in order to see how he understands his task. Water distribution, the timetable, the condition of canals, sanction mechanisms, self-assessment and general problems associated with the community water system were hereby identified as important.

2.2.3 Social Mapping

Participatory mapping is crucial to Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and can be applied to different aspects of rural life. Depending on the topic under consideration, it can explain the situation of social issues like health, wealth, literacy and social stratification, or give an idea about economic activity and forms of livelihood, e.g. the availability of resources such as livestock, farms and fields, water collection, forests and soils (Mukherjee 1997, 48-52). Whenever I asked my four or five informants to help

draw the map of their village, each without fail started with the streets. I then asked them to draw the neighbourhoods, called *mahalla*, buildings of general interest like shops, the school, clubs etc., land-use and irrigation systems, water taps and so forth, to find out if there are social divisions in the village and therefore which part of it might be suitable for the household survey. I used the social map to understand the physical structure and social divisions of the village better, and identified issues that required further detailed information to consolidate the study design (Bhattacharjee 2001, 33).

2.2.4 Household Survey

As Mukherjee (1997, 22) suggests, the survey is the conventional method of data collection. In a survey, the objective is to gain an overview by repeating a set of questions listed in a questionnaire. Investigations are carried out on this basis. Data gathered in a survey can give an average picture of trends and characteristics over time and regions in relation to different aspects (Mukherjee 1997, 22).

I developed a structured questionnaire for both households and individuals. Each household was interviewed about its general livelihood, rather than focussing only on migration. Data was collected on the demographic composition of households, e.g. the number, age and sex of their members, as well as socio-economic data like levels of education and current occupation. Additionally, the migration history of every household member was registered, including past, present and planned migration, each with indications of the destination and job carried out. Finally, to get information about the importance of remittances to the household, informants were asked about their livelihood situation, the household income and its access to water and land.

The selection of the parts of the villages to be investigated was done using the information collected on the transect walk and through the social mapping. 123 members of different households were interviewed in Sai and 152in Boz Adyr, in both cases with the help of a list of the heads of all the households that I copied from the *aiyl bashy*.

It was necessary to pre-test the questionnaire because it was strongly standardised and my existing knowledge of these villages was rather scarce. Differences between *ülüsh* and *bak* were discovered as well as between drinking- and irrigation-water.

Most interviews, which were usually unannounced, were conducted with the head of the household. If he was not at home, his wife or children answered the questions. People generally greeted this show of interest in their village warmly. Only one household in Sai refused to provide information. Normally we were invited inside for tea and bread. It is a Kyrgyz tradition that if a guest enters a house he has to break the bread and try it. In the evenings, people even came to our house to complain that we had not yet visited their house. Once, in the street, one person spontaneously started hurrying from house to house to announce that the “Swiss lady” was coming to see them.

2.2.5 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are characterised by more or less open questions that can be answered freely by the interviewee and are collected in an interview guideline (Flick 1998, 94). The method of semi-structured interviews intends to neutralise the alleged contradiction between being directed by theory or being open-minded. It is an imitation of the theory-generating procedure of the Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) where the interplay of inductive and deductive thinking contributes to increasing the user's knowledge. During the data collection phase, the previous knowledge the researcher inevitably possesses must be disclosed and serves as a heuristic analytical framework of ideas for questions during the dynamic dialogue (Witzel 2000, 1-2). The complex conversation strategy seeks to apply previous knowledge to develop questions (deduction) without obscuring the original views of the respondent (induction). The expectation is that the interviewed subject's viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in a relatively openly designed interview situation than in a standardised interview or questionnaire as these tend to be more restricting than illuminating (Flick 1998, 76). Guidelines are a supportive device to prompt the interviewer's memory on the topics of research and are used as a basis to bring a new turn to the interview should it threaten to stagnate on an unproductive topic. Guidelines provide a framework of orientation to ensure a comparability between interviews (Witzel 2000, 4), including the interviewer's freedom to decide if or in which order the questions are posed, as well as laying down the crucial aspects, the so-called key questions (Schell et al. 1999, 355).

In a first step, twelve guided interviews with **national organizations and NGOs** involved in the topic of migration in Kyrgyzstan were carried out in Bishkek, Osh and Batken. These expert interviews are a specific form of applying semi-structured interviews: the interviewee is of less interest as a person than in his or her capacity as an expert in a certain field of activity (Flick 1998, 91-92).

A **roundtable discussion** on the subject of legal support for labour migration was organised by IOM and Bishkek Centre for Social Initiatives and held in Bishkek. More than 15 NGOs and state organisations participated.. This was an excellent opportunity to get a general idea of the situation of labour migration in Kyrgyzstan, of the projects implemented by various organisations and of the state of the literature, the documentation and the statistics on labour migration available in Kyrgyzstan.

Furthermore, interviews were conducted with different **village experts** familiar with the area and with village life. To solve the problem of how to gain access to the field or the subculture under study, key individuals with detailed or specialised knowledge about the village were sometimes used to introduce me to the setting and to establish contacts (Flick 1995, 160). I exchanged information with staff at the municipal authority such as the *aiyl bashy,* with the school director in Sai (in whose house I and the interpreter stayed), as well as with the *aksakal* from Boz Adyr (whose family invited us to stay with them), school teachers, *murab*, herdsmen and leaders of NGOs.

In addition, interviews were held with members of households, that have adopted migration as a livelihood strategy, i.e. at least one family member has migrated in the past or at present. 18 interviews with these what I have called **migrant households** were conducted in Sai and 14 in Boz Adyr.
The questions included the destination, the motivation and decision to migrate, and how migration is organised and financed. I also asked about whether and how migrant kept in touch with their families and about the migration history of families in general. Other topics of interest were remittances and their use.
In addition to the brief household survey, I carried out further investigation into people's livelihoods. To gain better understanding of households that do not adopt migration as a strategy, what I called **non-migrant households** were interviewed. 15 such households were visited in Sai and 9 in Boz Adyr.

All interviews were conducted with the help of an interpreter. For the interviews in Bishkek, an interpreter translated between Russian and German. However, because she did not speak the Kyrgyz language, as is relatively common in Bishkek, she was not the right person to accompany me to the southern province of Batken. In the villages, the first interpreter who helped me in Sai had worked as an English teacher in Osh before, and the second interpreter who assisted me in Boz Adyr was a student in political science and English. Both of them had prior experience as interpreters. We stayed together with families in the villages.
The interviews lasted between 20 minutes and 4 hours. Often it was not possible to ask all the questions contained in the interview guide (described in chapter 2.2.5.), because the topic covered was too broad. Thus I tried to focus on specific subjects and build on the knowledge the interviewees had. For example, household members who had stayed behind knew more about the use of remittances in the village and what the absence of a family member means for the household or for their position as a migrant household in the village. The returned migrants themselves were willing and able to provide information about how their migration was organised and the working and living conditions in the region they had migrated to.

The process of selection of the migrant and non-migrant interviewees was made using the household survey and wealth ranking, which provided me with a basis and some prior knowledge. The following criteria were taken into account for the selection of the households and interview partners:

- The duration of migration, how many times they had left the village over the last 10 years and whether they had migrated previously or no longer migrated;
- Whether returned migrants were staying with the family at the time of research;
- A comparison with the wealth classes of the village, as far as the data from the wealth ranking were evaluated;
- Socio-demographic data such gender and age.

During the interviews, I took down notes in a field notebook, following the interpreter's words as accurately as possible. No tapes or video were used, but I took photos to help me to remember specific interview partners and situations.

2.2.6 Wealth Ranking

Wealth is defined by Grandin (1988, 2) in terms of *access to or control over* important economic resources. Wealth inequality is found in every human community and is among the most important characteristics that differentiate people within a community. Wealth status is not merely seen as an economic attribute of a person or household; social and political importance is also correlated with wealth. Chambers (1983) outlines what he calls the "deprivation trap", specially designed to represent the rural context, in which five "clusters of disadvantage" interact with each other, to trap people in a disadvantaged situation. Wealth can be seen as the opposite of the deprivation trap. The five clusters are

- Poverty: lack of assets such as small house, little land, little or no livestock, etc.;
- Powerlessness: weak negotiating position with those in control, ignorance of the law, competition for employment;
- Physical weakness: illness or disability, or migration of active adults;
- Isolation: lack of access to markets or information;
- Vulnerability: unforeseen circumstances such as crop failure, flooding accidents, sickness or death.

The wealth ranking method helps us understand socio-economic disparities between households and reveals local criteria for wealth classification, which can be further used to study policy-making. It contributes to finding out in which ways rich and poor households in an area differ and how high the relative wealth status of each household in a selected area is (Mukherjee 1997, 60-61).

Image 1: The Method of Card Sorting for Wealth Ranking

Sorting the cards of households for wealth ranking categories

Cross checking the wealth-classes

Source: Rohner, 2004.

One method of wealth ranking, as Grandin (1988) describes, is "card-sorting", whereby a list of households is prepared and each household is assigned an individual number. The list of households is available for Sai and Boz Adyr from the *aiyl bashy*, the chief of the village. The number of each household together with the name of its head is written on a separate piece of paper and these are then ranked by three or four key informants per village. In separate sessions, each informant is asked to place each card on one of a series of piles, each of which represents households of similar wealth status. Each informant can choose the number of piles he/she wants to make, as long as there

are more than three and no more than 40% of the households are assigned to any one pile. Thereafter, a cross-checking is done and the qualitative criteria of wealth used in ranking is discussed with the informant. The final wealth classes help us understand the criteria by which wealth is judged in a particular setting (Grandin 1988, 17-20).
To calculate the average score and grouping for each of the households specified by the informants in each village, each household must be given a score per informant. This is done by dividing the score of certain pile by the total number of piles. These scores are added together for each household and then divided by the number of informants available. In order to check that the calculations matched, I decided to calculate the standard deviation for the different scores of each household. For the final ranking, I did not consider those households with the highest standard deviation nor those with less than 3 nominations as this meant that informants did not know them. This procedure meant that about 7% of the households in each village not being taken into consideration for the final results. I decided not to count these households because the households selected from the household survey (123 households in Sai and 152 in Boz Adyr) constituted too large a sample for a wealth ranking.
In Sai, the standard deviation between the rankings was smaller than in Boz Adyr. This could indicate that the wealth ranking in Sai is more reliable than the wealth ranking in Boz Adyr. It may well be that the atmosphere in each village has an influence. In Sai, my impression was of a peaceful village, where everybody knows each other well. In Boz Adyr by contrast, gossip and disputes about land, houses and water are common. Moreover, Boz Adyr is a recent village, where population fluctuates more than in Sai, so people find it more difficult to rank the households on the basis of their perception of their wealth, because people do not know each other very well.

2.2.7 Participant Observation

Observation is a process whereby the observer tries to grasp anything perceptible to his/her senses. Actors observe behaviour and actions in order to orientate themselves in the world. This observation does not only include his/her visual perceptions but those based on hearing, feeling and smelling as well. This is also a definition of observation, an everyday skill that is methodologically systematised and applied in qualitative research. An interviewer is always a transmitter of stimuli with which the object should interact, while the observer tries not to have an effect on the object (Girtler 1992, 44).
The main feature of the method is that the researcher immerses himself/herself in the field, observes from the perspective of a participant but also influences what is observed by his or her participation. From these reflections, it follows that a researcher performing unstructured participant observation passes through all stages – complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant, complete observer – at one time in his work (Flick 1998, 137; Girtler 1992, 45-49).
Different conceptions of observation and of the observer's role can be found in the literature (Flick 1998, Girtler 1992). The scale or range of observation varies from covert to overt, non-participant to participant, systematic to unsystematic, natural to artificial, or from self-observation to observing others (Flick 1998, 137; Girtler 1992, 44-45).

When entering the field, which implies first natural observation, I always conducted an interview with the *aiyl bashy* in order to establish a first contact with the village and to announce the purpose of my stay, both out of respect and research ethics. This study was conducted on the basis of unsystematic observation. Observations were not planned and were therefore done whenever an opportunity presented itself. The last day of school, a shop-warming party, a concert in the club in Boz Adyr, traditional rituals at the *mazar* and a visit by a clairvoyant were a few such special occasions.
Participant observation must be seen as two different processes. On the one hand, observation should be led by the research question to ensure that observation can be justified as a research method. On the other hand, the observer should participate more and more in the setting and gain access to the field and to the object (Flick 1995, 158). In an advanced state of participation, the term "going native" (Girtler 1992, 63) is used, which means that the observer goes along with the observed objects, the norms and behaviour of the observed actor are adopted and the observer starts to identify with the actor or object of research. The question arises if the observer still retains the ability to observe and his or her objectivity (Girtler 1992, 63-64).

> *"Simple observers follow the flow of events. Behaviour and interaction continue as they would without the presence of a researcher, uninterrupted by intrusion" (Adler and Adler 1994, 378, In: Flick 1998, 137).*

Adopting a suitably passive point of view makes it possible to participate in the daily coherence of the observed actors' lives while allowing them to remain close to their natural behaviour (Flick 1995, 189).
Personal observation is regarded as a very useful method for evaluating the discrepancy between oral information from interviewees and their actual conduct and situation. In a foreign cultural context where the researcher does not speak the language, it is thus possible to get an impression of the interview situation purely through observation. This is the situation I faced in Kyrgyzstan. When one's possibilities of speech are limited, then observation takes on greater importance in one's everyday life, regardless of whether the observer is a complete participant or a complete observer of normal events. For example, observing how a house is furnished or if there is a ghetto blaster or television (which were certainly brought from Russia) is a way of getting an impression about migration and the use of remittances.

2.2.8 Data Analysis

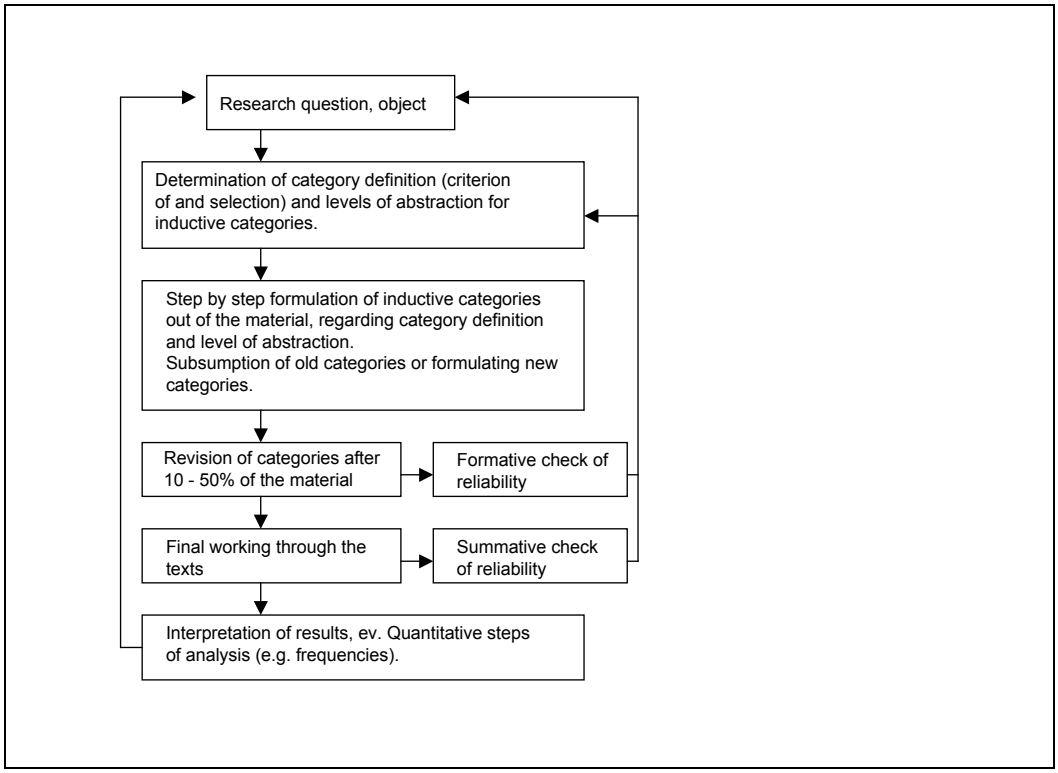
Due to the fact that an interpreter translated every interview, I decided to do the research without taping. I tried to write down the words of the interpreter as accurately as possible in a field notebook. In addition, I kept track of experiences, thoughts, daily routines, further work steps and first interpretations in a field diary. One must take into account that the documentation in the field book and the transcription constructed a new reality, which is

> *"… the only (version of) reality available to the researcher during his or her following interpretation" (Flick 1998, 176).*

To interpret the collected data, I used the method of qualitative content analysis. Mayring (2000, 1) defines this as

> *"… an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification". It is an „… approach of systematic, rule guided qualitative text analysis, which tries to preserve some methodological strengths of quantitative content analysis and widens them to a concept of qualitative procedure" (Mayring 2000, 1).*

Figure 1: Step Model of Inductive Category Development



Source: Mayring 2000, 4.

The main purpose of the procedure is to formulate a criterion of definition, derived from theoretical background and research questions, which determines the aspects of the textual material to be taken into account. The inductive development of categories, which is a reductive process and not a deductive application of categories, has to be carried out.
Following this criterion, the material is worked through and categories are deduced tentatively and step-by-step. These categories are revised within a feedback loop, possibly reduced to main categories and then checked for reliability. A possible quantitative analysis by frequencies of coded categories is suggested (Mayring 2003, 471).

Quantitative data analysis of the general household survey was entirely done using Microsoft Excel.

3 Patterns of Migration in Kyrgyzstan

Historically the population inhabiting the territory of present-day Kyrgyzstan was highly mobile. The Kyrgyz people were traditionally nomadic and the territory was scarcely populated a century ago (World Bank 2003, 69). In the following chapters the historical evolution of migration during the Soviet period and after independence is outlined. A special focus is put on the latest development of labour migration patterns in Kyrgyzstan, based mainly on expert interviews and newspaper articles.

3.1 State of the Art about Migration Research in Kyrgyzstan

Since political upheaval in Kyrgyzstan, migration is becoming a more and more discussed phenomenon. In the early phase after the collapse of the Soviet era many non-ethnic Kyrgyz left Kyrgyzstan for their home countries and ethnic Kyrgyz immigrated to Kyrgyzstan. This process is documented by data from the Annual National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan by several historians (Capisani 2000; Huskey 1997) as well as international organisations (UNDP 2001; UNDP 2002; World Bank 2003). The internal movement in Kyrgyzstan is illustrated by Schuler (2004) based on the National Census 1989 and 1999. Several international organisations (UNDP 2002; World Bank 2003) only peripherally touch the topic of internal migration, and the reports are mostly based on Schuler as a co-author (see UNDP 2002).
To this day nearly no research on international labour migration is done in Kyrgyzstan. There are no official statistics on the number of Kyrgyz labour migrants in foreign countries (Roundtable Discussion, IOM, 2004). The newly growing process of labour migration is widely discussed in the media and shows the importance of the topic for Kyrgyzstan. Many non governmental national (Bishkek Centre of Social Initiatives, United Youth Union „Golden Goal“) and international organisations (Eurasia Foundation, International Organisation of Migration (IOM)), as well as governmental organisations (Governmental Department for external Migration, Migration Service Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, Regional Centre on Migration and Refugee Issues, Southern Regional Department of Migration Service by M.F.A, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Kyrgyz Republic) started to work on the topic of national and international labour migration in Kyrgyzstan. Recently, a comparative study of labour migration in Mexico, India and Kyrgyzstan by Bichsel, Hostettler, and Strasser (2005) was published. Within the NCCR a comparative research project on labour migration in Central Asia, South Asia and Central America started only in 2006. The first results of research on labour migration in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia have been presented at a roundtable in July 2006 in Bishkek (CAMP 2006, 4).

Therefore, due to lack of information on labour migration in Kyrgyzstan this study is mainly based on data from self-conducted interviews in Bishkek, Osh and Batken, as well as in the two villages of Sai and Boz Adyr. To compare patterns and processes of labour migration in the villages, studies on labour migration in other countries are consulted.

3.2 Migration during the Soviet Period

Since 1913, the country's population increased nearly six fold and the urban population grew four times faster than the rural one. There was an influx of migrants from all over the former Soviet Union, brought about by such policies as vocational training, high education and the encouragement of graduates and young professionals to work in other republics. Also, mass deportation under Stalin had a significant influence (IOM 2005).

Up until 1959, Kyrgyz statistics do not dispose of figures on migration within the Republic and from and to other Republics. Therefore the initial year in the observation row is 1960, and shortly thereafter, in 1963, external net migration[1] took its highest positive effect on population development in Kyrgyzstan, reaching 1.26%. From this moment on the trend reversed, turning negative in 1975 and remaining negative to this day. The peak negative situation occurred in 1993 (see Figure 2), when external net migration fell as low as –2.65% (Schuler 2004, 5-6).

However, the former Soviet state openly and directly manipulated patterns of economic development and the allocation of social resources in order to influence individual-level demographic decision-making (Buckley 1995, 896). The attempt to regulate patterns of population movements and urban growth was made by means of an internal passport system and limits on central city registration (Buckley 1995, 896). By preventing migrants from integrating themselves into distributional networks in restricted cities, the passport and residence permit system, later called *propiska* (Buckley 1995, 897), generated a situation in which potential migrants either acquired *propiskas* through semi-legal avenues, denied themselves access to distributional networks or chose not to migrate (Buckley 1995, 896). However, permits symbolized housing rights to a particular state apartment or space in a state dormitory, access to education and health care, and, at various times, the ability to purchase deficit items, such as shampoo or paper napkins, all required the presentation of a *propiska* (Buckley 1995, 911).

Some voices from Soviet migration specialists held well into the 1980s that the passport and *propiska* system was necessary, as managed migration allows the Soviets to most efficiently benefit from labour as well as avoid the negative aspects of capitalist migration (Buckley 1995, 897). The obtainable goal under socialism was the elimination of informal migration in order to provide conditions for "social growth without social problems" (quote in: Buckley 1995, 898) Propaganda to undermine the *propiska* and for eliminating migration was written with slogans such as:

> *"It is not the case that millions of people leave the countryside for the city because under socialism peasants are the real masters of the land" (Buckley 1995, 897).*

[1] Net migration: The difference between the number of people permanently entering and exiting a territory by crossing the border during a specific period of time. If more people leave the territory than enter, this would result in a negative net migration figure or if the number of incoming people is higher than the number of people who are leaving means a positive net migration (Schuler 2004).

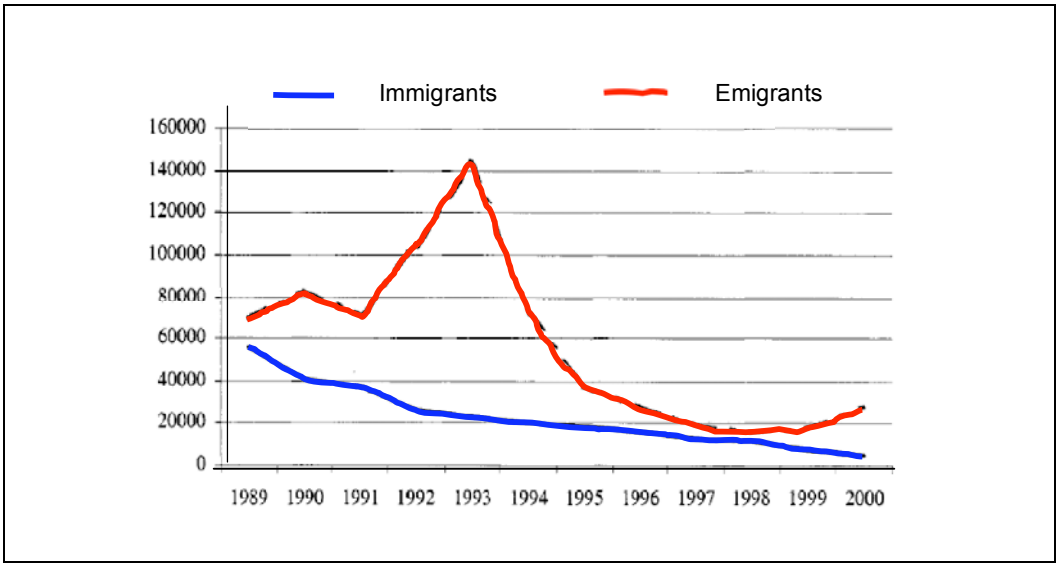
Others like Lewis and Rowlands (1979, in Buckley 1995, 897) argued that these legislative obstacles are of little importance in directing migration. Macro analyses of population trends indicate that passport and *propiska* restrictions exerted only a slight influence on aggregate urbanization patterns and migration flows (Buckley 1995, 896). As long as motivation for migration persisted, methods for circumventing administrative restrictions could be found. Circumvention was facilitated by labour shortage throughout the economy, which made finding employment easier. Semi-legal and illegal methods were used, like bribes and fraud at passport offices, marriages in name only, abuse of military papers, individual influence and personal links to officials or the exclusion of distributional networks (Buckley 1995, 905-908).
Small numbers of people began to migrate within the Kyrgyz Republic before the 1980s but the first mass rural-urban migration began in 1989, as a result of the *perestroika* process in the USSR (IOM 2005).

3.3 Recent Migration Patterns since Independence

During the early years of transition, the break down in industry, trade, and the collapse of the collective farm system and rural infrastructure that followed the disintegration of the Soviet Union led to international mass emigration on the one hand and internal migration from the remote areas and villages to the towns and cities on the other hand. The rigid system of residence registration has been softened but not abolished (World Bank 2003, 69). *Propiska* took an important role for privatization programs in rural and urban areas in order to equally distribute means of production into private hands e.g. it built the basis to distribute the state land among the population (Buckley 1995, 914).
Since independence, within new political and economic conditions of the country, migration processes in Kyrgyzstan show fundamental changes. Migration has undergone the process of "opening". It has expanded from a CIS to a world scale by opening borders. Nonetheless, at the same time it has decreased from the CIS to a one-country scale, reinforced by the barrier function of the borders between the new independent CIS countries. In the national context, the economic situation led to a fast growth of the capital and its satellites[1] (UNDP 2002, 35; Schuler 2004, 3).

[1] This large internal migration flow in the Kyrgyz Republic in the last years brought about emergence of new slums in the periphery of Bishkek- the so- called „*Novostroiki*". Today there are about 23 precarious settlements in Bishkek, and all are named after their inhabitants (World Bank 2003, 71). Most of these settlements lack basic infrastructure services and are often located in areas where there are adverse environmental health- related impacts. The Keleckek settlement is mostly inhabited by migrants from Batken (Interview, Bishkek Centre of Social Initiatives, 2004).

Figure 2: Migration Flows in the Kyrgyz Republic, 1989 - 2000



Source: National Statistical Office of the Kyrgyz Republic, In: World Bank 2003, 69.

As shown in Figure 2 the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a first mass migration outflow from the Kyrgyz Republic that took place mostly between 1991 and 1994. In contrast to the outflow, there was a continuous and steady decline in the number of immigrants over the last decade of the last century. The years from 1990 to 1994 showed a high negative net migration, but towards the end of the decade, migration became more or less balanced. External migration reached its peak in 1993, when about 143'000 individuals emigrated. This first wave of emigrants was mostly composed of ethnic Russians, Germans, Ukrainians, Tartars and Uzbeks. The trend in migration outflow reversed after 1993, and by 1998 the number of emigrants reached a low of about 16'000 individuals. In 1999, however, the volume of emigrants has started to increase again, and more then 27'000 people left the country (World Bank 2003, 69; Schuler 2004, 7). This second increase of external migration is seen as an answer to the Batken events (IMU invasion see chapter 4) in 1999 - 2000 (UNDP 2002, 34).

During several decades of the former Soviet Union, the Kyrgyz Republic was a territory of immigration, especially in the 1960s when a strong modernisation in the industrial sector as well as in agriculture took place. During this time immigration contributed significantly to population growth and reinforced a multi-ethnic society – a source of pride for the country. Nevertheless this multi-ethnic society had relatively clearly defined social, political and economic specialisations by ethnic groups as well as a certain typical geographical differentiation, an urban-rural cleavage (Schuler 2004, 3). The reason for ethnic migration after the independence is that all countries of the former Soviet Union went through the process of strengthening their national identities. Schuler (quote in: UNDP 2002, 36) mentioned that

> *"perhaps the most important element was to define the status of the state language; all republics made a choice in their policies, which favours a local ethnic group. Kyrgyzstan was one of the republics in which this shift was reached with a high level of understanding of the needs of all ethnic groups. Nevertheless re-*

lations between different ethnic groups have changed. Several groups have lost their real or relative advantages they used to have. Independence and political changes have influenced social and political situation of ethnic groups in different ways. Consequently, immigration and emigration became one of the principal methods of response to the changes".

A second fact is that the different ethnic groups responded in quite different ways to the newly available opportunity to migrate, depending on their social integration and economic status as well as on outside factors that have probably been more decisive than inside elements. Some ethnic groups have been encouraged to move to their corresponding countries, as in the case of Jews and Germans, whereas Russia and other Slavic countries promote a policy that is less clear.

Table 2: Emigrants by Ethnic Origin in Kyrgyzstan

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total:	103,728	143,619	71,197	37,302	27,584	19,538	15,671	17,818	27,887	31,633	32,717
including:											
Kyrgyz	3,321	3,158	2,268	1,654	1,661	1,440	1,169	1,162	1,396	1,718	2,182
Russians	59,294	89,984	41,463	18,718	14,020	9,891	7,869	9,281	17,485	20,217	20,351
Ukrainians	8,064	11,740	5,267	2,472	1,773	1,295	1,099	1,125	2,136	2,531	2,445
Belorusians	722	885	366	177	117	102	89	110	130	156	128
Uzbeks	8,098	7,766	4,384	3,010	2,043	1,546	1,116	1,673	1,239	998	1,141
Kazakhs	1,512	1,603	870	702	591	415	430	424	507	724	1,008
Georgians	36	22	21	19	16	8	6	2	16	19	19
Azerbaijans	344	334	168	123	111	96	93	96	130	136	174
Lithuanians	45	38	14	12	14	10	4	11	10	12	6
Moldavians	86	114	72	27	36	14	18	17	39	44	34
Latvians	41	57	19	8	10	2	2	3	12	7	13
Tajiks	748	611	292	182	115	119	116	169	172	89	71
Armenians	101	182	95	41	36	38	27	33	35	46	45
Turkmen	36	35	22	9	6	2	5	5	4	6	5
Estonians	12	39	19	17	7	5	6	7	5	6	6
Tatars	4,286	9,468	4,128	1,941	1,392	1,048	721	874	1,263	1,288	1,440
Jews	489	637	467	323	235	178	135	161	174	172	113
Germans	12,833	11,148	8,236	6,070	4,039	2,430	1,934	1,728	1,808	1,688	1,637
Uigurs	376	420	253	230	170	130	104	110	141	193	185
Dungans	253	225	141	130	100	48	49	97	128	193	294
Koreans	494	715	427	387	289	167	165	206	257	347	374
Turks	161	261	125	106	85	46	60	52	115	109	111
Chechens	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	39	31
Others	2,376	4,177	2,080	944	718	508	454	472	649	895	904

Source: UN 2003, 40.

As a result of these conditions emigration varies quite strongly from one group to another (see Table 2), ranging from a near 90% loss of the German population to a stable migration outflow of Uigurs and Koreans. Great losses are also the 300'000 (one third of the Russian population of 1989) mostly well educated Russians, who left the country between 1989 and 1999. They were especially living in the cities where they were economically active in leading positions of industry, education, research and the public sector (Schuler 2004, 4).

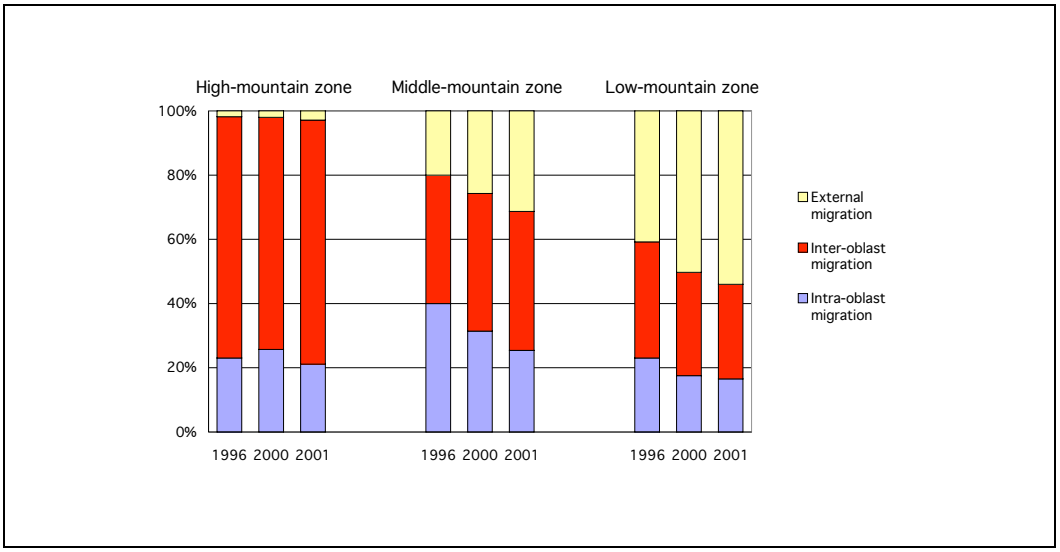
The return of ethnic Kyrgyz from other countries into Kyrgyzstan represents a further challenge to developing policy, legislation and project delivery for integration. Since independence about 20'000 ethnic Kyrgyz arrived in Kyrgyzstan. Ethnic Kyrgyz increasingly express a desire to return to their homeland. In response to growing discrimination in their host countries and encouraged by a presidential decree inviting ethnic Kyrgyz back to their homeland, a wave of immigration took place (UN 2003, 26). In 1989 175'000 Kyrgyz were living in Uzbekistan, 120'000 in China and 65'000 in Tajikistan. According to Schuler (2004, 4) a great number of Kyrgyz are still living in different Central Asian Republics.

From 1993 to 2000 both external and internal migration (compare Figure 2) intensity decreased considerably (Schuler 2004, 6; World Bank 2003, 69). Nonetheless, migration is still of major importance today, due to the inequality of flows: international emigration is much higher than immigration and likewise, internal migration from rural places to urban is higher than the other way around (World Bank 2003, 69). Schuler (2004, 6) added that

> *"… migration is also a key problem, since motility (the intention to move) is stronger then the observed mobility (the realised moves)".*

Finally, international migration patterns must also be compared with the internal structure of the country and its geographical orientation. In this section it will be shown how international migration affected internal mobility, with the help of a migration analysis by altitude above sea level (high-, mid- and low-mountain zone) in the study period from 1996 to 2001 carried out by the UNDP (2002).

Figure 3: Percent Ratio of Leaving Population by Intra-*oblast*, Inter-*oblast* and External Migration



Source: National Statistic Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, In: UNDP 2002, 35.

This report has revealed a substantial population shift from high-mountain regions to valleys. These migration flows are loosely connected to various aspects of the economic situation in the mountain regions, like shortage of pastures and decay of the mountain mining industry, as well as potential alternatives available in valleys. In the high-mountain zone inter-*oblast* migration constitutes the highest volume, while the share of external migration is insignificant. The external migration outflow to CIS and other countries is typical for the low-mountain zone where it increased from 41% to 54% during the 1996 - 2001 period. The pattern of the international migration in the second half of the 1990s differs from that of the first half because emigration abroad has decreased. On the other hand the internal migration flow is still high and directed from rural to urban areas (UNDP 2002, 39; World Bank 2003, 70).

Simplified, the migration flow in Kyrgyzstan could be described as a movement from mountains to valleys, from valleys to cities, and from the cities to Bishkek, a take off location for people wanting to leave the country (Tages Anzeiger 2005a). From this point of view, internal migration during the period under observation has tended to balance population distribution by offsetting losses through international migration and by somewhat compensating for rural areas with a high natural increase of population (Schuler 2004, 9). Furthermore, international emigration had some significant effects on the internal migration flow. Emigrants cleared places, such as job- or social positions, housing and land, which can be reoccupied by people moving and living within the country. Therefore, internal migration flows can be seen as a reoccupation of vacant opportunities of emigrants (Schuler 2004, 4).

3.4 New Tendencies of External Labour Migration

Since achieving independence, Kyrgyzstan has experienced the following large-scale migratory flows:

- Ethnic emigration of the non-indigenous population: Russians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Kazaks, Byelorussians and Germans (Schuler 2004, 7; UN 2003, 40), who returned to their places of origin.
- Immigration of ethnic Kyrgyz, refugees and asylum seekers from Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Chechnya and Azerbaijan (UN 2003, 24; Schuler 2004, 7).
- Internal rural-urban migration (UN 2003, 25; Schuler 2004, 8).
- External labour migration (no official data, own empirical material, 2004).
- Other smaller scale migration trends, like "ecological migration", the main recurring natural disasters that annually inflict extensive damage, particularly in the mountainous regions, are mudflows and snow avalanches, "educational migration" and "pilgrimage" (own empirical data, 2004).

An absolutely new tendency in this dimension for the Republic of Kyrgyzstan is external labour migration, which grew by leaps and bounds while other migration trends remained relatively static in recent years (IOM 2005). Labour migration flows are dynamic and flexible, reacting rapidly to changing conditions in both the sending and receiving countries. The actual total of labour migration from Kyrgyzstan exceeds official figures by far because its dominant feature, temporary labour migration, is extremely difficult to track. Census questionnaires asking about birthplace and the last previous domicile of a person as well as the year of the move can clarify the situation regarding internal migration, but international emigration cannot be accounted for (Schuler 2004, 5). Up to today there are just a few official numbers concerning labour migration (for example the unpublished documents by Batken Ministry of Migration, 2004). The official figures are mostly far too low because the greatest amount of labour migrants is leaving the country illegally and Kyrgyzstan is not yet in the position to record these external migrants. Recently a few governmental and non-governmental organisations in Kyrgyzstan became aware of the increasing movement of labour forces, such as the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) and several NGOs like e.g. the Bishkek Centre of Social Initiatives in Bishkek, the United Youth Union „Golden Goal" in Osh, the Eurasia Foundation, and the Employment Service Centre in Bishkek.

As a young sovereign state Kyrgyzstan still does not posses exhaustive experience in solving migrational problems, which is why they rely on international expertise. Partly they are based on the norms and standards of international working organizations (Aymar 2004).

3.4.1 Destinations of Kyrgyz Labour Migrants

The Russian Federation and Kazakhstan attract the majority of labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan. The motivation factors for targeting CIS countries include common recent history, lack of visa requirements, the role of Russian as the lingua franca across the former Soviet Union, and the presence in the receiving country of a Kyrgyz diaspora community, relatives and friends. However the main reasons for emigration are the expectation of a higher salary and the stable demand for foreign workers (Interview, Bishkek Centre of Social Initiatives, 2004). There are no official statistics on the number of Kyrgyz labour migrants in foreign countries (Roundtable Discussion, IOM, 2004). Therefore further elaborations are based on interviews and newspapers (compare chapter 3.1).

According to some estimates the number of Kyrgyz labour migrants in the **Russian Federation** ranges from 300'000 - 500'000 (Roundtable Discussion, Migration Service Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2004; IRIN 2003a) depending on seasonal factors. The number increases during the construction season and falls with the onset of winter (IRIN 2003a). At the end of year 2000 4.9 million people resided in Kyrgyzstan, 39% of whom constituted the labour force (UNDP 2001, 60-62). This would mean that 6 - 10% of the total population or 16 - 26% of the labour force of Kyrgyzstan migrates to Russia.
Information is given by Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs that in the Russian Federation are about 2000 migrants residing with permanent and 76'500 with non-permanent registration. Only about 4800 people have an official permission to work. This illegal position of Kyrgyz people in Russia directly influences local people's relations with those supplying the foreigners with work (Aymar 2004; IRIN 2003b). If policies continue to follow the current pattern, the share of illegal migration will (continue to) rise quickly. This would be accompanied by a number of effects for Kyrgyz migrants and the Russian population. Effects could be a weakening of control over the economic and demographic situation in particular regions and in the countries as a whole, a rise in corruption, escalating tensions between migrants and the rest of the population and between employers and the state, and the growing influence of radical nationalistic and pseudo-patriotic movements (Vitkovskaya 2004, 88).

The same process is taking place in **Kazakhstan**. According to different estimations there are about 50'000 to 120'000 Kyrgyz people living and working there (Roundtable Discussion, Migration Service Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2004; IRIN 2004), what means 1 - 2% of the total population of Kyrgyzstan or 3 - 6% of its labour force. The majority of migrant workers are working in the tobacco fields. A lot of them leave for Kazakhstan with their families. Only 2000 migrants are residing legally in Kazakhstan (Interview, the Southern Regional Department of Migration Service by M.F.A, 2004). This means that the majority of migrants are working and living in the neighbouring country of Kyrgyzstan illegally (Aymar 2004). However, Kyrgyzstan recently signed an agreement for agricultural migrants

working in tobacco plantations in Kazakhstan (Interview, the Southern Regional Department of Migration Service by M.F.A, 2004). Furthermore,

> *"…the government had already signed an agreement with Astana [Kazakh capital] on the social security of labour migrants working in agriculture in border regions" (IRIN 2004).*

There are two legal organisations (Oso Egemiar, Adtin Adam) with a certain contingent sending migrant workers to Kazakhstan. Additionally, about 50 illegal recruiting agencies are working in Osh alone, sending workers abroad (Interview, the Southern Regional Department of Migration Service by M.F.A, 2004).

Recently Kyrgyz people also started migrating to **England and Korea** (Interview, Bishkek Centre of Social Initiatives, 2004). Currently 10'000 Kyrgyz (Toralieva 2005) are making the risky trip to England for illegal, relatively high-paid work. In Russia and Kazakhstan wages are lower and immigration controls are becoming strict. A Kyrgyz woman working in London (UK) reported:

> *"Till now no one checks up on you in England, the main thing is not to cause a fuss and be noticed by the police" (Toralieva 2005).*

Outside the former communist block, e.g. Britain, Kyrgyz government totally lacks mechanisms to monitor the movement of economic migrants. A newly introduced computerisation of data on Kyrgyz citizens arriving at the Airport Manas in Bishkek should help measure these movements (Tages Anzeiger 2005b).
Travel agencies who are experienced at dodging visa regulations help organize the trip to England. Interested parties have to pay 2000 USD to such an agency to organize a letter of invitation to Britain and a further 1000 USD for obtaining the visa itself. Three nights in a hotel and someone from the agency to meet the immigrant in England is included in the price (Toralieva 2005).
Others managed to stay on in Britain after having arrived on a student visa. The first step is that students have to pass an interview with the English consulate in Almaty, Kazakhstan (Interview, Tourist Company Eldorado, 2004). Once in England, a student is officially allowed to work four hours a day, but police do not check this, as a student-migrant confirmed (Toralieva 2005).

There are many illegal recruiting agencies in Kyrgyzstan sending Kyrgyz citizens abroad to work. The government tries to regulate these agencies. Migrants face risks associated with working illegally abroad. Risks increase by the fact that the disreputable travel agencies they use often abandon their clients, leaving them to try and find work on their own. They are also vulnerable to exploitation, and if things go wrong they find themselves with little support (Toralieva 2005).

It is estimated that more than 3000 Kyrgyz people are living and working in **Korea**. In Bishkek, the Tourist Company Eldorado is the only firm that, since 2003, holds a legal contract with Korea to farm out 500 vacancies per year, namely 300 jobs in the fishing industry and 200 in agriculture. Before Eldorado won the competition of the Ministry

of Labour, getting the Korean contingent for Kyrgyz migrants, they organized shopping tourism to China, Syria, Iran and the Emirates. Today, Eldorado launches huge advertisement campaigns in Bishkek's TV, radio and newspapers. Strong and healthy men between the age of 20 - 40 can apply for vacancies in the fishing industry. While in agriculture men are suitable when they are between 30 and 45 years of age, 160 to 190 centimetres tall and do not have a criminal record. Kyrgyz men willing to pay 2500 USD, including the flight and accommodation in Korea receive a legal status to work there for 3 years. Most of the applicants have to take loans by a bank for the initial money needed. In Korea they can earn 550 USD per month and at the end of the year 900 USD extra. Unfortunately, Eldorado has so far not been able to send workers to Korea, because it is extremely complicated to fill in papers and forms for each person. But soon the first 90 people will be ready to leave for Korea (Interview, Tourist Company Eldorado, 2004).

The worst result of migration is that the trafficking of women has emerged as one of the most serious forms of crime in the Kyrgyz Republic and is also the most difficult one to address. A report in 2000 by the International Organisation on Migration (IOM) estimates that around 4'000 women and girls are trafficked every year, mostly to Russia, Turkey, Germany and the UAE for enforced prostitution. Most women's groups working on the issue feel that these numbers are underestimates (IOM 2000, 6).

3.4.2 The Market's Invisible Hands in Russia

Russia became an important international labour market in the 1990s. Structural reforms launched in the second half of the decade were accompanied by the lifting of controls on labour relations and wages and the creation of a housing market. Russia's lack of demographic resources as a result of the low birth rate and high death rate, combined with insufficient mobility on the part of some groups within the local population, led to the need for foreign labour (Moiseenko et al. 1999, 22). The role of the extractive and processing industries in the Russian economy was not only maintained but even strengthened. The second half of the 1990s was further marked by a revival of the construction industry. All these industries require large numbers of male workers. In addition, with the rise of labour migration from Russia to Western Europe, labour migrants from other CIS countries have started to fill the resulting vacancies (Olimove and Bosc 2003, 23).
In the early 1990s, the country began absorbing ethnic Russians, forced to repatriate from the new independent states. However, the way in which they were welcomed by the government and public has amounted to a missed opportunity for Russia to offset its demographic and labour shortages, at least temporarily, by integrating ethnically and culturally similar migrants with a relatively high level of education and qualifications. 1997 the legislation on refugees and forced migrants had come into effect and the official number of forced migrants decreased drastically. The second stage the migration situation in Russia has gone through is the migration flow now mostly made up of voluntary rather than forced labour migrants. This change of the nature of migration in Russia also means a change in the ethnic makeup of the new migrant population There are progressively fewer ethnic Russians and more persons from other ethnic groups,

which the statistics refer to as "predominantly residing outside Russia" (Vitkovskaya 2004, 85-86). Social tension has risen apace with labour migration. More and more Russian press reports stress a link between labour migration and crime, while other reports stress the cultural gap that allegedly sets migrant workers from Central Asia apart from Russians (Kimmage,2004).

Russian media has stoked fears that foreign workers are taking jobs away from Russian citizens and boosting unemployment. Yet so far labour migration from abroad has had no significant impact on the domestic job market. The percentage of foreign workers has not risen above 1% of the total number of employed. Russian labour markets remain unaffected by migration pressure even in regions saturated with migrants (Olimove and Bosc 2003, 25). Economic statistical data shows that 6 percent of Russian companies experienced labour shortages in 2000 (demand of extra 751'000 persons) and by 2001, the figure had climbed to 27 percent. The declared demand for labour at the turn of this century has skyrocketed. In 1996, there were 10.8 unemployed persons for every advertised employment opportunity, declining till the year 2001 with only 1.5 persons requesting. It is said that until 1999 this indicator was lower than 1.0 only in Moscow, whereby in 2001, 14 regions had crossed that threshold. While at this time in Moscow and Tyumen region the "number" of unemployed applicants was 0.4 per job vacancy (Vitkovskaya 2004, 85).

However, some politicians make out migrants to be enemies and blame them for the country's social and economic problems. Alarming statistics that do not coincide with any calculations and run counter to numerous studies constantly make their way into the public domain. Claims have been made, for example, that migrant workers export around 15 billion USD yearly, amounting to 360 USD per migrant and month. However, a survey conducted by the IOM in Moscow in 2002 showed that in Moscow, where their wages are highest, they earned on average 240 USD per month. Migrants spend a substantial share of that sum in Russia, to pay for housing, food, transport, health care and, last but not least, fines and bribes (Vitkovskaya 2004, 83-84). At the end, according to IOM estimates, the average migrant worker sends 80 USD a month back to his family (Kimmage 2004). In other regions, the monthly wages of migrant workers are lower and do not even reach the 200 USD mark. Furthermore, about three-fourths of labour migrants are paid under the table, which makes it impossible to calculate the sums sent abroad by migrants separately from the general flow of unreported income taken out of the country by Russian citizens (Vitkovskaya 2004, 84). The deputy head of Russia's Federal Migration Service reported:

> *"They constantly find real slaves who build elite housing with no hope of ever getting a salary. These slaves work for room and board; their passports are taken away for additional security" (Kimmage 2004).*

Not many people can face the situation in Russia like the deputy head of Russia's Federal Migration Service, who noted that

> *"…[the] country's economy has a ravenous demand for the cheap labour that nearby CIS countries can provide. Russian Federation can feel the temporary benefits of labour migration. […]. The market's invisible hand moves millions to seek higher wages in Russia" (Kimmage 2004).*

3.4.3 Migration Laws in Receiving Countries

The most popularly targeted country of Kyrgyz migrant workers is the Russian Federation. Therefore a special focus is directed towards strict laws on entry and stay of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation.

More than a decade after Kyrgyzstan gained independence from the former Soviet Union, it is still hard for some Kyrgyz to get used to the fact that in today's Russia they too are subjected to the laws concerning foreigners.

Foreign nationals fall under the Federal Law "On the Borders of the Russian Federation", the 1996 Federal Law "Regulating Departure from and Entry into the Russian Federation" and the international agreements signed by Russia. The constitution of the Russian Federation, Art.62(3), gives foreign citizens equal rights and duties with those of Russian citizens on the country's territory, except for cases specified by Russian law or international agreements (Olimove and Bosc 2003, 68).

Citizens of other CIS countries than Russia are defined as foreigners in Art.1 of the Federal Law "On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens in the Russian Federation", which was passed on 1 November 2002. It further regulates the status, rights and obligations of foreign visitors and temporary and permanent residents (Niaz 2005). The Law introduces three categories of stay and residence respectively in Russia; temporary stay[1], temporary residence[2] and permanent residence[3] (Kadlets 2003, 1).

The registration requirement is regulated by the Federal Law. Citizens of non-CIS countries need a visa for Russia, which must be registered within 72 hours on arrival in the country. Like other CIS citizens, Kyrgyz citizens do not need a visa to enter Russia, but they must register at the passport office of a local police station (Olimove and Bosc 2003, 65). So, the Federal Law, under Art.37, requires foreign citizens to obtain migration cards on entering the country, which are valid for 90 days. Migration cards do not entitle the holders to any benefits but must be kept with them at all times. If foreign citizens are not granted a temporary right to reside in the country they are obliged to leave under Art.5(2) of the Law after the three month period (Niaz 2005).

Foreign citizens must register their stay within three working days of their arrival in Russia. They must submit a written application either in person or through an inviting organization to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Olimove and Bosc 2003, 68).

A new system for issuing work permits to employ foreigners has been introduced by the Law in Art.13. Now each individual or legal entity intending to employ a foreigner should obtain permission to attract and use foreign labour force. A foreigner must have his or her own work permit to work in Russia. The whole procedure is more compli-

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[1] Temporary stay refers to foreigners staying in Russia on the basis of a visa or arriving in Russia without a visa when a visa was not required. For the latter category duration of the temporary stay is 90 days but it can be extended up to a maximum of one year.

[2] Temporary residence permits may be granted within the quota established by the Russian Government for the maximum period of three years. Without the quota a foreign citizen can obtain a temporary residence permit in limited cases provided by the law.

[3] Permanent residence permits can be granted if applicants have lived in Russia for at least a year on the basis of a temporary residence permit. Permanent residence is issued for a period of five years and can be extended as often as desired.

cated and time consuming than it was before (Kadlets 2003, 2; Olimove and Bosc 2003, 69).
Under Art.5, if the foreign citizen has signed a work contract, his or her stay can be extended for the duration of the contract, but only up to one year. Art. 6 sets a quota for the number of foreign citizens granted temporary residence. The temporary residence permit is valid for three years (Olimove and Bosc 2003, 68).
Such new policies and laws

> *„...have exacerbated existing problems by making it more difficult for migrants to become naturalized and to find employment, thereby driving them underground and creating fertile ground for corruption" (Vitkovskaya 2004, 83).*

In the Russian Federation net migration figures reached their maximum in 1994 with 914'600 persons. In the following years a decreasing trend is notable. In 2002 the net migration reached 123'700 persons. However, those figures are indicative not so much for a decline in immigration as for a decrease in the share of legal migrants (Vitkovskaya 2004, 87).
Kyrgyz labour migrants often come into conflict with the laws of the countries in which they live and work. Migrants often ignore Russia's rules on registration or are not informed how one can stay legally in Russia, because of the recent changes in the visa regulations in Russia requiring them to fill out special migration cards, which are given to them on crossing the Russian border. A Kyrgyz government official stressed in an interview with IRIN (2004)

> *"…that estimates suggest that the majority of Kyrgyz labour migrants abroad are illegal, with most of them largely unaware of the laws and migration rules of the recipient country".*

Because of lack of information Kyrgyz organisations started distributing brochures containing important and useful addresses as well as explaining migrants' rights and duties targeting Kyrgyz labour migrants heading for CIS countries, like the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Information in the booklet could also help labour migrants protect themselves against abuses from some law-enforcement officials. There have been reports (IRIN 2004; Jumagulov 2005; Kimmage 2004) that Central Asian labour migrants in Russia have had to maintain a low profile in order to avoid police officers, who often stop them and try to extract bribes. The brochures would mainly be distributed at railway stations, airports and border-crossing points by the NGO's Golden Goal and the Bishkek Centre of Social Initiatives. The IOM donated 25'000 USD for the printing of the guidelines developed by the migration department (IRIN 2004; Interview, Bishkek Centre of Social Initiatives, 2004; Roundtable Discussion, IOM, 2004; United Youth Union "Golden Goal", 2004).
It is estimated that Russia hosts some 5 million illegal migrant workers[1], thereof 1.5 million in the Moscow region. This means that about 90% of all migrant workers lack legal status and myriads of them face difficulties. In the time period from early 2004 to

[1] Estimates of the number of illegal migrants in Russia vacillate between 1.5 million and 10 million persons. The figure cited by officials – 5 million – seems the most probable (Vitkovskaya 2004, 87).

September 2004, 9000 foreigners were deported from Russia (Kimmage 2004). Russian law stipulates that after having received three warnings, illegal migrants immigration services can begin the deportation process. In practice, the system often provides a license for extortion. A deportation results in a five-year ban for re-entering the Russian Federation (Jumagulov 2005).

Jumagulov (2005) pointed out that life as a migrant worker has never been easy, but recently it has become intolerable. Migrants around Moscow face a new form of extortion at the hands of Moscow police. They "deport" illegal migrants by taking all their cash and dumping them on deserted roads on the outskirts of the Russian capital, instead of sending them back to their homelands. Furthermore, he wrote that lawyers at the human rights organisation Moscow Partnership found documents stating that these migrants were deported and that funds were allocated to pay the deportation costs (Jumagulov 2005). Migrant workers are vulnerable to such rackets because they often lack the right documents allowing them to live and work in Russia. In theory they have the right to acquire legal status, but in practice this is difficult. Furthermore, Jumagulov (2005) says that new arrivals must register with the authorities within three days, but migrant labourers cannot do this themselves. They have to be registered by their landlords, which in most cases are their bosses since almost all of them live in hostel accommodation provided by their employers. Moreover, documents supplied by employers are often fake.

3.5 Trends of Labour Migration for the Coming Decades

Since the socio-economic and political situation in Kyrgyzstan is unlikely to change in the near future, migration will remain a promising livelihood strategy especially for households in rural areas. International labour migration will continue because the combination of factors in the countries of destination, especially in Kyrgyzstans' main destination Russia, will maintain immigration and even boost it as a managing tool for the national labour market (UNDP 2002, 39). The head of the migration laboratory at the Institute for Economic Forecasting, said in March 2004 that after 2010 Russia will need to "import" at least 1 million people per year, and by 2015 Russia will exhaust the labour reserves of the CIS (Kimmage 2004). Therefore, given the unlikelihood that Russia will manage to establish full control over its borders in the coming decade, immigration will continue to grow, and the main factor influencing migration and its consequences will be Russia's migration policies. If those policies continue to follow the current pattern, the scale of illegal migration could double, at the very least (Vitkovskaya 2004, 88). Vitkovskaya (2004, 88) proposes possible ways to counteract such a scenario, such as the broadening and liberalization of legal opportunities for migration, government amnesty programs, measures to decrease under-the-counter sectors of the economy and public awareness campaigns to promote tolerance. For that to occur, Russian migration policy must rise to the challenges that face it.

Within this future perspectives of the Russian labour market and migration policies no change can be expected in the tendency of increasing number of international labour migrants in Kyrgyzstan. These big population losses should not have a quantitatively negative impact on the workforce and will not be any different from the past (UNDP

2002, 39). The director of Bishkek Centre of Social Initiatives (2004) mentioned in an interview:

> *"What would we do when all migrant workers come back to Kyrgyzstan at once. Unemployment would increase drastically".*

Concerning internal migration changes of the patterns are forecasted. There is a real risk of an internal migration increase that will lead to the depopulation of rural areas, in particular in the north, and in high mountain areas where there will also be a decrease in natural growth. Without taking effective measures through regional politics, urbanization will continue and will seriously ruin the balance between population growth in rural and urban areas (Schuler 2004, 13). The role of Bishkek as the centre of modern economic and cultural life has an integrating impact. Nevertheless, the development of transport communications inside the country and establishment of Osh as the second national cornerstone can lead to the strengthening of the north-south shift and to help decreasing the migration flow to the capital (Schuler 2004, 13). Obviously rural policies will have to be oriented towards creating vacancies in different areas including industry and tourism, construction and transportation, while the agricultural sector will have to be reformed and the current labour force in this branch will diminish (UNDP 2002, 39).

4 Setting of the Case Study Villages Sai and Boz Adyr in the Province of Batken

Map 1: Kyrgyzstan and its Provinces and the Villages Sai and Boz Adyr in the Province of Batken, Bordering the Enclave Sokh

Source: Development Gateway 2005 and Central Asian Maps 2005, modified by Rohner 2006.

The field research of this study was carried out in the rural area of the province of Batken. It is located in the very south-west corner of Kyrgyzstan at the border of the Ferghana Valley, almost completely enclosed by Uzbekistan and Tajikistan borders (see

Map 1). It is one of the southern provinces, which are separated from the northern provinces by high mountains. There are still many territories in the Batken province that both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan pretend to own. Therefore the border system is complicated and intricate. Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have together seven small enclaves in Kyrgyz territory. The most important are the Uzbek enclaves Sokh and Shakhimardan and the Tajik enclave Vorukh (Capisani 2000, 214; Trautner 2002, 14). Until late 1999 Kyrgyzstan consisted of only six Provinces. As a consequence of the invasion of a large armed Uzbek separatist group, IMU (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) in August 1999 and the subsequent fights of at least three months, the western part of Osh *oblast* was split off and declared the new Batken *oblast* (Trautner 2002, 11; Cordier 2005, 3). Its administrative centre is Batken town with 13'726 inhabitants (National Statistical Committee 1999). The province is sub-divided into 3 districts, *rayons* – Leylek, Batken and Kadamjai.
In the year 2000 the real gross regional product from Batken *oblast* reached 1'199 USD (USD (PPP) per capita), not even half of the country's average, which lies by 2'521 USD (UNDP 2001, 64,70-73). While the poor population makes up half of the country's population as a whole, it constitutes more than two thirds of the population (69%) in the Province of Batken. Numbers of unemployment vary throughout literature. According to official statistics, the unemployment rate in Batken *oblast* is 11.0% (UNDP 2000, 13). In reality, the unemployment rate is thought to be much higher. Slim (2002, 496) assumes that in the Kyrgyz part of the Ferghana Valley, in the province of Batken, the unemployment rate fluctuates even from between 50% to 80%. Especially among young people unemployment is very high (UNDP 2000, 13; Slim 2002, 496).
It can therefore be concluded, that at the time of this study the province of Batken is geographically and economically in Kyrgyzstan's offside. Because of the difficult and new economic situation prevailing since independence, labour migration is becoming an important source of income. Therefore two villages in the Batken *oblast* have been selected for the fieldwork and the resulting study about income diversification in form of labour migration. The following sections introduces the reader to the geographical and socio-economical setting of the villages Sai and Boz Adyr.

4.1 The Village Sai

Sai, which means river in Kyrgyz, is situated at an altitude of 1125 m.a.s.l. (Batken Gosregister: old map from the 1970s) between small mountain valleys at the foot of the Alai Range. Sai belongs to the *aiyl ökmötü* of Kyshtut. Batken, the *rayon* and *oblast* centre, lies about 60 km west of Sai. On entering the village through apple tree plantations and soft hills on an unpaved road along the large riverbed of a small stream, the mountain scenery comes closer.
According to the *aiyl bashy* (Sai, 2004), the head of the village, about 60 families lived in Sai, when the first school was built in 1940. Currently 1760 people are living in the

village, 476 families in 350 houses. The village is divided into two units, Jogorku-Sai (220 houses) and Pas-Sai (130 houses) – which means upper- and lower-Sai. Pas-Sai is further divided into five neighbourhoods (compare Map 3), so-called *mahalla* – Mingan, Arasai, Yntymak, Kyr and Pas-Sai – which differ in settlement history, socio demographic structure and access to natural resources like land and water. The oldest part is Kyr, and the most recently built part is Yntymak, on the mountainside, where young families are living. The highest population density is found by the riversides in Pas-Sai, where mostly elderly people and normally their youngest son reside, who has to stay in his parent's house and take care of them (patrilocal). Nowadays the population is still increasing in the village, but at a lower rate, due to the fact that land is hardly available anymore.

Electricity is reaching the village, but no phone line – the next public phone is located in Sokh. An unpaved road, crossing the Uzbek border without any public transport, connects the village with the main highway. In Sai there is a rudimentarily equipped surgery, whereby the next hospital is located in Batken. At the village school currently 420 children study from the first to the eleventh grade. Furthermore, there are three shops in Sai, one of which just opened during my field studies. Villagers wish to have a public *banya*, a village club, a sport hall, especially for wintertime, and public transportation allowing them to reach the markets and sell their goods. Till now there is no pipeline for drinking water in the entire *aiyl ökmötü*. The villagers of Sai take their drinking water from the unpaved water canal on specially designated days when irrigation is forbidden. The water is obtained from the river that runs through Sai. Arasai is in the favourable position of obtaining clean water from the *mazar* spring. Plans to build a 15 km long water pipeline that will supply the village with proper drinking water from the *mazar* already exist.

Because houses are built close to each other, they are surrounded only by little gardens (*bak*) where vegetables and fruits for daily supplies are cultivated. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the state land was divided among the villagers. Each resident received 1.8 are (*sotka*[1]), called *ülüsh*. The average of entirely irrigated land per family is 21.7 are (total of 123 families), with *bak* and *ülüsh* integrated in a single category. Six households additionally have leased land (see Figure 8).

In summer 1998 an enormous mud stream had dashed down the valley, originating from the spring called *mazar*. In Arasai 64 gardens were destroyed and 31 houses were swept away. Sai lost a lot of arable land, enormous amounts of mud dominate the picture of the village to this day. Sai does not have land to provide the affected families. Some of them rebuilt their houses and cleared their fields from all the stones, in awareness that they continue to live in this hazardous zone. Others moved to Burgundü, where they received adjudicated land from the government.

In Soviet times many villagers worked for the state farm "1st Maya", to which Sai belonged or, for industrial enterprises in Haidarkan, like the quicksilver mine. After the collapse of the Soviet Union land was made available for private living and agriculture and many industries closed down or reduced the number of employees drastically, leav-

[1] 1 *sotka* = 1are = 100m^2

ing villagers unemployed. To this day, agriculture and cattle breeding are the two employment sectors in the village. Villagers mainly grow potatoes, carrots and fruits such as apples, along with apricots and walnuts (Schmidt 2005), which they sell on the markets of Sokh and Hushyar in Uzbekistan. As agriculture plays such an important role and arable land is limited, water to irrigate this land is a well-discussed and delicate topic. The *aiyl bashy* and the *aksakal* impose sanctions to help avoid arising conflicts. Especially during the hot and dry summer months cultivation without irrigation is impossible. Therefore, four main irrigation canals in the village alternatingly receive water in a daily rota. Because livestock forms an important source of income in Sai, there are several herdsmen looking after the animals. During the summer season, when water is scarce and meadows turn yellow, they lead the animals up to the mountains, the so-called *jailoo,* in turn to a fee per animal paid to the Batken administration.
In the summers of 1999 and 2000 fighters of the IMU, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan passed Batken *oblast*, where they took hostages and demanded 1 Million USD from the government of Bishkek in order to bring the guerrilla warfare to Uzbekistan (Lüders 2003; de Cordier 2005, 3). When the fighters came close to Sai, the whole village was evacuated to Batken. After the military threat diminished landmines remained in place. To this day they present great danger to local citizens and their cattle.

4.2 The Village Boz Adyr

Like the name Boz Adyr indicates, the village is situated in the soft greyish hills of Batken *rayon*, approximately on the same altitude as Batken, at 1000 m.a.s.l. Boz Adyr is the administrative centre of the *aiyl ökmötü* of Suu Bashy, 30 km from Batken.
In Boz Adyr (compare Map 4), 1948 villagers reside in 418 households (*aiyl bashy*, Boz Adyr, 2004). The population is still increasing,

> *"Children are born and wives from other villages are moving to Boz Adyr. Those who temporarily have left their houses will be back in autumn" (aiyl bashy, Boz Adyr, 2004).*

In 1964 a mere five houses made up all of Boz Adyr. From 1965 to 1995 many people moved here, because during the Soviet time the settlements of Suu Bashy and Kyshtut *aiyl ökmötü* were parts of the "1st Maya" state farm (*sovkhoz*), where Boz Adyr with the largest pasture land, played an important role as its administrative centre and cattle-breeding farm. After the Soviet Union collapsed, many people moved back to their places of origin, as there were no jobs left in Boz Adyr. In the 1970s a lot of people from Kara Tokoi were relocated to Boz Adyr or Aigül Tash due to the beginning of the construction of a water reservoir in the Sokh enclave. The dam was nearly finished, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union no money was left for this project. Today, people from Kara Tokoi would never allow the Uzbeks to finish the dam. "*We would never give land to them*!" People from Boz Adyr laugh about and say in a manner of irony that it would be nice to have a lake promenade in Boz Adyr. But still, they are scared, as it is a big instrument of pressure for the Uzbeks, because in case of a conflict they would be prepared to simply close the floodgate to flood the Kyrgyz fields.

The village Boz Adyr is located along the important main road Batken-Osh, which promotes the information flow – the village has one telephone at the *aiyl ökmötü* as well as a post office, and the mobility is guaranteed by public transport. Electricity is not a problem either. Villagers can choose among four shops that offer daily goods or go to the weekly market in Batken or in Sokh, Uzbekistan. The village has a hospital, a school offering elementary classes through high school for about 900 students and a kindergarten. For entertainment villagers go to the only and highly appreciated club in town. What is missing in the village is a *banya*, the construction of which is planned close to the newly built reservoir, and, in addition, mothers wish for a small park for the children to play.

One of the main problems in the village is water. The inhabitants of the upper half of the village receive drinking water from the Soros spring built in 1992 (three taps in Soros street) or carry water from the Jan-Bulak spring. The lower part of the village receives drinking water from the recently rebuilt water reservoir. The head of the local NGO "Batken umutu", took initiative to find donors (USAID), to reconstruct it. Today water runs for one to two hours a day, cleaned with chlorine and strong light. People who use this water have to pay 5 *som* per month, which is not understood by the villagers. Boz Adyr's population has a vital interest in a stable water supply, because their farming depends on irrigation. On the door entering the water pump station it says in Cyrillic letters: "WATER FOR LAND – CROP FOR PEOPLE". Water is pumped up from the river Sokh on Uzbek territory to the village's water station, from where gardens are irrigated by timetable once a month. One of the problems is that the water pump station is located southwest of Sharkabad, on Uzbek territory. The water has to be brought up through a 12 ha arable plot, which is disputed. For Uzbeks this canal is a good instrument of pressure. Several times they blocked it when the conflict over this disputed land arose.

The dry climate of the region does not allow agriculture on non-irrigated land. For that reason water supply and irrigation is a continuing topic of interest. During the Soviet time, when Boz Adyr was with its 2'100 ha one of the vastest pasture land for sheep and cows in the region as part of *sovkhoz*, it was technically and politically possible to irrigate most parts of this land. After the collapse, the village had to reduce livestock drastically (Ludi 2003) from 25'000 animals to 2500 cows. Today, during the short spring the animals graze the plain on the west side of the village and during hot summer, enduring shortage of water in the downstream section, endangering it of becoming a steppe, most of the animals are sent to the village *jailoo* of "Suu Bashy". On the *jailoo*, in the mountain area, juniper and pine trees grow in contrary to the village of Boz Adyr, where few poplars, the wood of which is used for construction work, characterize the image. But because forest is so rare, the forest community controls that the trees are not cut down.

The remaining arable land, as well as the dry land, was equally distributed among the villagers in May 1995. Each member of a family received two are of garden (*bak*), seven are of wetland and five are of dry land (*ülüsh*). While interviewing 152 households (see Figure 9) the distinction between wetland and dry land was always made. Wetland, in this case, means gardens *(bak),* which could be irrigated at least once a

month, irrigated fields (*ülüsh*) and leased land. The average per household is 24 are of wetland. Dryland means never irrigated gardens *(bak)* and never irrigated land (*ülüsh*). The average of dryland per household is 35 are. A quarter of the households did not know how much dryland they own and another quarter of the households answered that they own no dryland at all, what gives the impression that the dry land, which they cannot use for agriculture, does hardly have any importance for them. On wetland the villagers grow cash crops like potatoes, carrots and grain. In gardens often orchards are grown, like apricots, apples, peaches and cherries. Till today agriculture and cattle breeding build the main sources of income for the villagers. The connection to the main road influences the activities of the villagers. Many houses facing the main road sell fuel, a few villagers even commute between Boz Adyr and Batken for a paid job in the third sector and others organized busses to take them to the local markets to sell their products. Women take an active role in the village and organized different self-help groups, like teaching one another to wave and knot carpets with traditional Kyrgyz ornaments or they formed financial groups.

In Boz Adyr I could identify three main problems, which cause conflicts. The first problem are land-disputes along the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border which are closely related with the second problem, the need of irrigation water. As a third problem the border regime was mentioned. Existing border posts are disturbing transit crossings to the Uzbek territory and cross-border trade is difficult, especially if one is not willing to pay for each crossing. A disillusioned man (Boz Adyr, 2004) said:

> *"During the Soviet time, there were no borders known right here. We went to help our Uzbek neighbours at the sovkhoz if they couldn't cope with the work."*

Security is provided by the militia outpost in Boz Adyr village and the close border post. The military outpost was built in response to the Batken conflicts. Different active NGOs are present in the village, which try to relieve the pressure on the village, working on crisis prevention and conflict transformation. These are NGOs like USAID, Mercy Corps, GDC, ACTED and FTI as well as the local organisation "Batken Umutu. Social control seems to be weak in the village. The *aksakal,* in Kyrgyz "the white beard", and the *moldo* try to intervene when there are conflicts or try to foster the dialogue among villagers.

Image 2: The Villages Boz Adyr and Sai

The village Sai

Results from the mud stream in Sai

The new shop in the village of Sai

Housewarming party in Sai: drinks-bread-candies

Dry surrounding of Boz Adyr

Dusty street and houses of Boz Adyr

Water wheel

One of the 12 water taps

Broken water canal

Source: Rohner, 2004.

5 Patterns of Labour Migration in Sai and Boz Adyr

Labour migration is a prevalent livelihood strategy in the villages Sai and Boz Adyr. Every year many people leave the villages for working abroad and many of them return in winter.
In this study migrant workers are defined as household members aged 18 and over, who moved away from their local community with the intension to earn money for at least one month, during the period 1991 to 2004. Thus, students who move to the city because of education and women visiting their husbands at their place of work abroad, without the aim to work, are not included into the study.

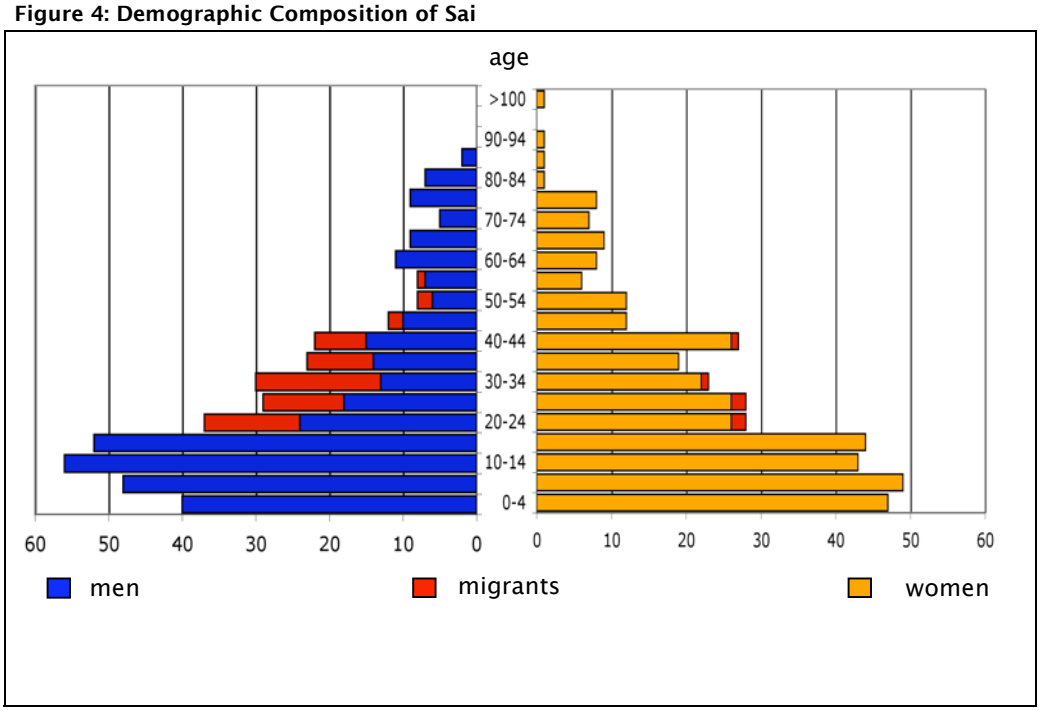
5.1 Profile of Labour Migrants

The selection of migration regarding social and demographic groups is analysed in the following chapters on the basis of the data of the household surveys and semi-structured interviews conducted in the villages. As argued in chapter 3.3 the migration flow in Kyrgyzstan affects the different parts of the country in an unequal way. Furthermore not all ethnic groups participate in the migration process to the same extent. Nonetheless, ethnicity is not the crucial category of research for this case study, because almost all interviewed persons were ethnic Kyrgyz. Ethnic Kyrgyz are also the main ethnic group from Kyrgyzstan with the intention to seek work abroad (Interview, Bishkek Centre of Social Initiatives, 2004).

5.1.1 Age and Sex

43% of the population in the province of Batken are under 15 years of age (National Statistical Committee 1999). This demographic composition gets also reflected in both villages of Sai and Boz Adyr (see Figure 4 and Figure 5). The bases of both pyramides are rather wide, especially in Sai. Women and men sides are taper off symmetrically.

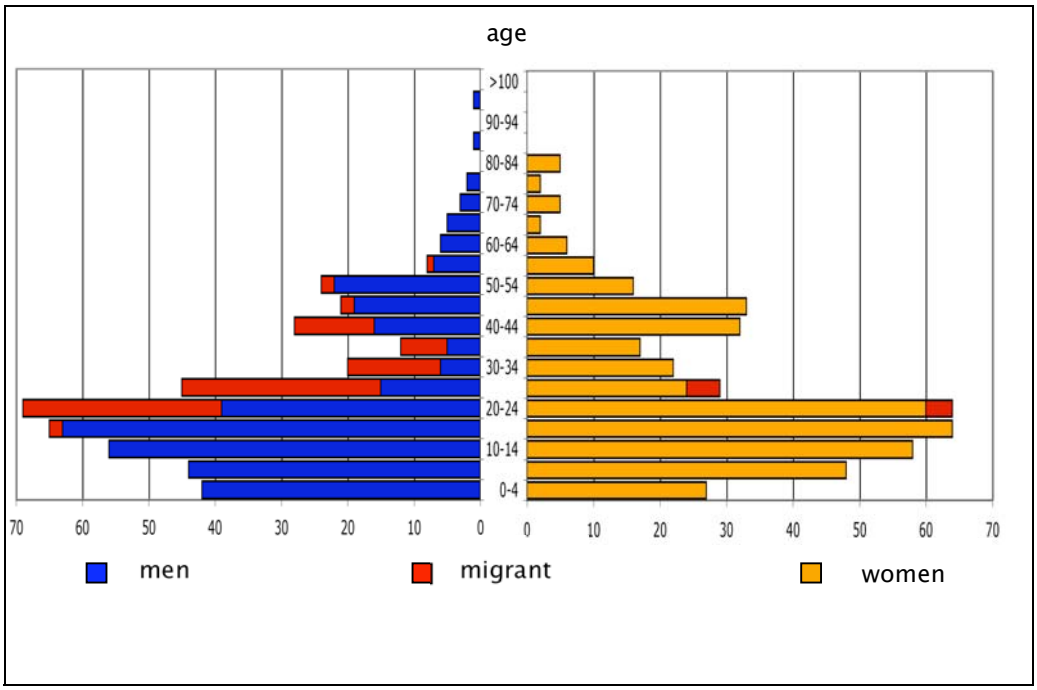
Figure 4: Demographic Composition of Sai



Note: Interviews were conducted in 123 households in Sai, whereby 782 persons, 374 women and 408 men, were noted. Out of them, 68 persons, 6 women and 62 men migrated in the year 2003 to 2004.

Source: Rohner, 2004.

Figure 5: Demographic Composition of Boz Adyr

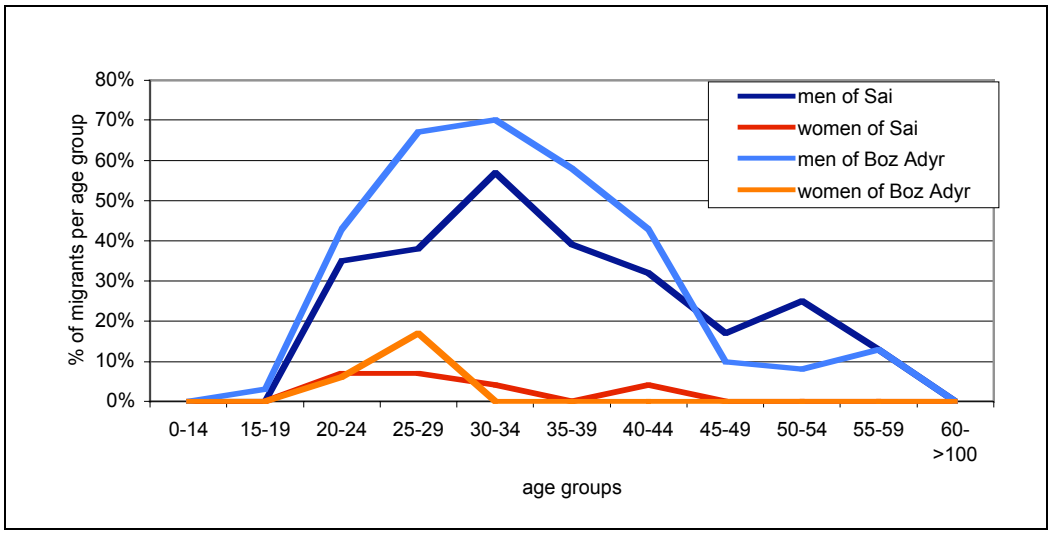


Note: In Boz Adyr 152 households were interviewed, whereby 890 people, 452 men and 438 women, were noted. 109 migrants, 9 women and 100 men, left the village to work abroad.

Source: Rohner, 2004.

The working-age population in both villages are the most mobile (see Figure 6). The group of the 30 - 34 aged, is the cohort most migrating. In Sai 57% and in Boz Adyr 70% of these cohorts have migrated during 2003 and 2004. This is possible due to the available jobs on construction sites in Russia, which is hard work and demands strength and a healthy physical condition. The two youngest men from Boz Adyr started to migrate at the age of 19 and the oldest man still leaving the village is 57 years old.

Figure 6: Migrant Workers from Sai and Boz Adyr (2003-04) and their Age Group



Source: Rohner, 2004.

The gender structure of labour migration from both villages is characterized by a predominance of males (see Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6). According to the research, 91% of the people from Sai respectively 92 % from Boz Adyr who left the village looking for a job were male.

The point in question is why women do rarely migrate. Most of their husbands or brothers were occupied in the construction sector in Russia and mentioned that their wives would probably find a job as a servant or a cook. However, the gap between assuming and knowing to find a job seems to be too big, so they do not take the risk or miss the chance. Furthermore, women, traditionally strongly engaged at home, are responsible for looking after the children, parents-in-law and the fields during the absence of their husbands.

Taking a closer look at the age-tree of Boz Adyr (Figure 5) raises the question concerning the explanation for the insection within the range of 25 - 40 year-old citizens on both the men and women sides. The large sample size and the random selection of the households exclude an unsatisfying counterbalancing of the sample. What seems to be more presumable is that the missing households were not reachable during the time period of the survey because they left home either for agricultural work, for visits of friends or for labour migration purposes (see chapter 5.2.2). This insection could also be an answer to the collapse of the "1st Maya state farm", when many villagers moved away from Boz Adyr, because of missing job opportunities (compare chapter 4.2). To leave the village for a longer time period is easier for young couples without children or pre-school children, to avoid exposing them to the perils of the journey and the

rough living conditions at the workplace, like Rogaly (2003, 629) interprets. The finding that migration depends on the life-course of a person is in accordance with Root and de Jong (1991, 224) as well:

> *"Migration of some family members is expected to be high during stages when major life-course transitions are occurring such as school, entry into the labour force, or marriage. In addition, in larger families with single young adults it is more likely that some family members would migrate".*

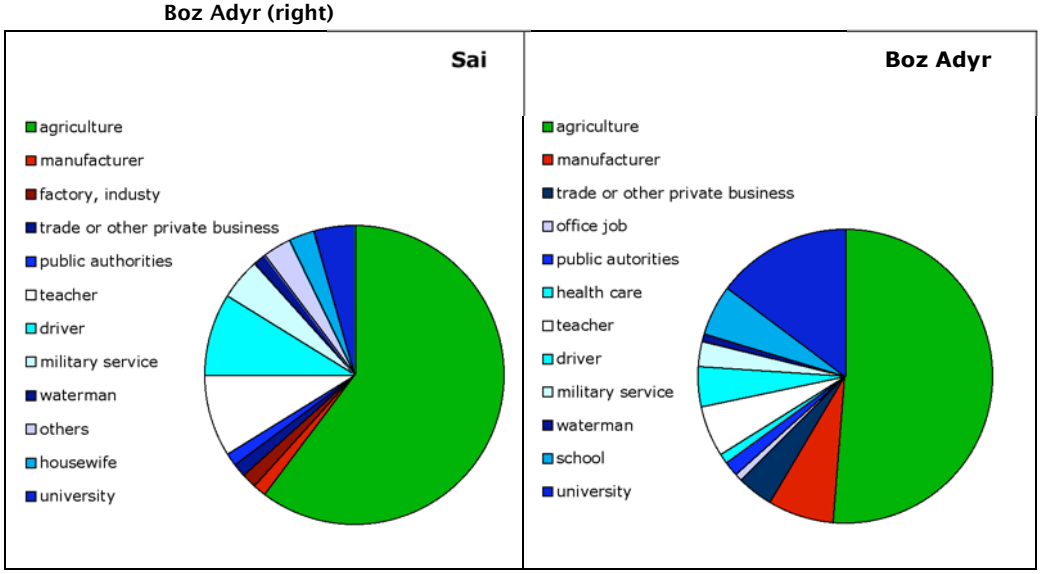
5.1.2 Education, Language Skills and Employment

In general, almost everybody, whether male or female, of the younger generation from Sai and Boz Adyr has basic education. Nine years of primary school are obligatory, but most of the villagers attended the facultative tenth and eleventh form as well. Migrants, which are holding a university or college degree, build the biggest group (41 %) of all migrants from Sai. In Boz Adyr the majority of migrants (60 %) holds a secondary education (eleventh form) degree.

According to Root and de Jong (1991, 225) higher skill levels, respectively broader human capital, may be translated into greater opportunities at potential places of destination. Thus, a distinct readiness for migration is to be expected among villagers with higher education. Nonetheless, by way of contrast to the expectations no clear correlation between migration and education level could be ascertained by the analysis of the study data.

According to the villagers, education plays an important role for the language skill of the migrants. As people are communicating in Kyrgyz among family and friends, they have to learn Russian at school. Migrants might be confronted with problems in Russia if they do not speak the language. For example they have to sign contracts without understanding them. This fosters vulnerability to exploitation. Others mentioned, that it is not necessary to speak Russian, because the migrants work together with other Kyrgyz people anyway. They help each other to manage daily commissions and otherwise they do best not to leave the compound where they work due to security reasons.

Figure 7: Employment of Migrants (2003-04) before they are Leaving the Village Sai (left) and Boz Adyr (right)



Source: Rohner, 2004.

Migrants who have professionally relevant qualifications are a highly heterogeneous group. They include teachers, construction workers, entrepreneurs, small traders, film-makers, taxi drivers, cooks, nurses, soldiers, clerks, and *murab* (person, who is distributing the water for the village). It is not astonishing that the biggest part of the taxi drivers in the villages are migrating from time to time, as cars are brought home as remittances from earlier migration.

The most striking feature of labour migrants is, that more than half of them worked in the agricultural sector before they left the village (Figure 7). This can be highlighted by the economic phenomena of the 1990s in Kyrgyzstan. The agricultural sector became more important for employment due to the deindustrialisation of the urban and rural locations, which took place after independence. Although, the agricultural employment is often a hidden form of unemployment. It is assumed that the agricultural is the strongest sector, because it catches a lot of unemployed people (Schuler 2004, 9). Interviewees stated that they left the country without having a profession or skills. Young people, who had never worked before or just finished school or started university without perspective to find a job, are more willing to leave for Russia (compare unemployment in the Batken *oblast*, chapter 4) and contribute with their income to the parents' household, who are no longer able to undertake the arduous work involved, as it is also found by Rogaly (2003, 629) in eastern India.

5.2 Characteristics of Migrants' Households

It is postulated by McDowell and de Haan (1997, 3) that households are the appropriate unit for analysis of migration patterns, acknowledging of course that the forms of households vary across time, space and socio-economic groups. Household has been defined in many ways and can be seen as a production and consumption unit (Rodenburg, 2000), an income-pooling unit (Smith and Wallerstein 1992) or a group of people who share food and common shelter (Wolf 1992). Taking the household as unit of in-

vestigation, it permits understanding migration as a social product, which is highly influenced by the dynamics of intra-household relations, and not as the sole result of individual decisions made by individual actors (Boyd 1989, 643). The household may be seen as "the next bigger thing on the social map after the individual", or as "the smallest grouping with the maximum corporate function" (Netting 1993, 58). Following the definition by Ellis (1998, 6), the household is conceived as

> *"…the social group which resides in the same place, shares the same meals, and makes joint or coordinated decisions over resource allocation and income pooling".*

However, the role of non-resident family members in contributing to the well-being of the resident group requires explicit recognition, especially in the context of migration (Thieme et al. forthcoming). The household as a sustenance and socializing unit decides if they like to cope with the strategy of migration or not. Remittances flow in to the common household pool, although the members of the household are "straddling" between locations. Rogaly (2003, 625) underlines that this flow shows that the net between the household and migrant is still guaranteed and the co-resident unit is just temporary torn apart, depending on the life-course of the household. Therefore the household can be used to capture diversity of income, social interactions as well as diversity of location.

A distinction is made between household and family, whereby the household (domestic group) is used to refer to the residential unit and its members who are temporarily migrating, while the concept of family is based on kinship (van Reenen 2000, 164). Therefore, the household may contain non-family members in contrast to the family, which usually includes only those members related by blood, marriage or adoption (Boyd 1989, 643). This is thought as an adequate distinction in the context of Kyrgyzstan because family structures are patrilocal and the youngest son of the household does have to take care of the parents. From this view, the family can be divided into different households, including different generations. When a distinction of household and family is made in this case study, the family becomes important because it provides information about places of destination, sources of settlement assistance, and financial assistance if the household cannot raise the initial costs for migration.

5.2.1 Who Migrates from the Household

The average household in Boz Adyr contains 5.9 persons. In Sai the number is slightly higher and lies by 6.4 persons per household. Most migrants in both villages come from extended households. Especially from data in Boz Adyr it is well discernible, that in households with six or more persons more than 70% of the households are with at least one migrant.

Table 3: How Many Persons Are Migrating per Family from 2003 - 2004

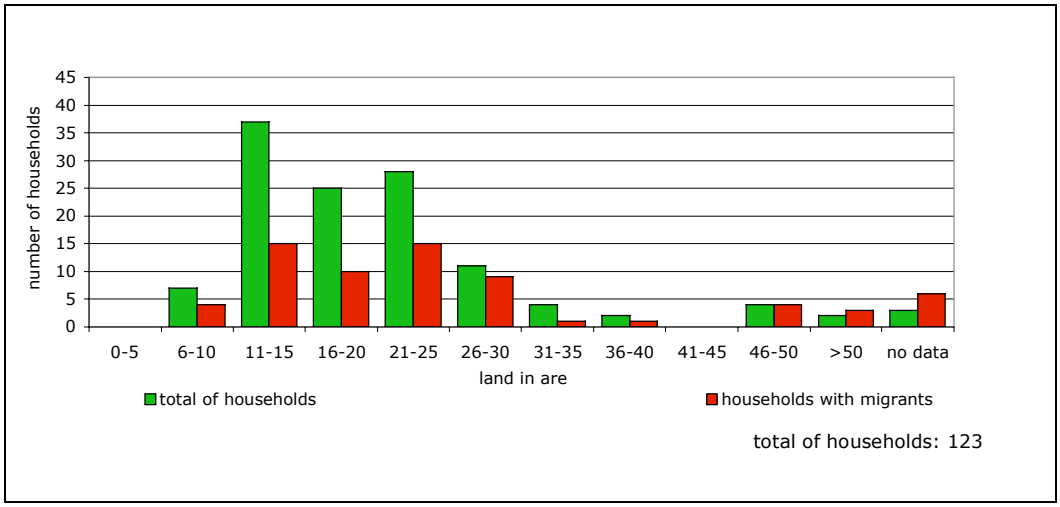
Household with…	… no Migrant	… 1 Migrant	… 2 Migrants	… 3 Migrants	… 4 Migrants	… at least 1 Migrant		Total of Households
Sai	76	33	8	5	1	47	38%	123
Boz Adyr	65	71	12	2	2	87	57%	152

Source: Rohner, 2004.

However, it is not unusual that more than one person from the household leaves for working abroad (Table 3). In both villages, Sai and Boz Adyr, the maximum of migrants per interviewed household are four. The less migrants per household there are, the more rapidly the number of households in this analysed class increases. In Sai 38% of all 123 interviewed families have at least one person seeking work abroad in the year 2003 - 2004. In Boz Adyr 57% of the 152 households live with the strategy of migration.
More interesting is the fact that in Sai and Boz Adyr in households with five people working force (age 18 to 60), 70% of the households have at least one migrant. The chance that household members migrate increases over 90% with growing household working power.
This can be explained on one hand by the fact that in households where working power is available there is the possibility to cope with one help less at the place of origin and the strategy of migration is more adapted to the household. On the other hand, due to the fact that in a household with more working power the income is more diversified, the risk for migration as a livelihood strategy can be shared or compensated with other incomes. This finding is supported by Boyd (1989, 645) who identified an effect on positive migration flow in households when there is at least one other secured income than from migration.

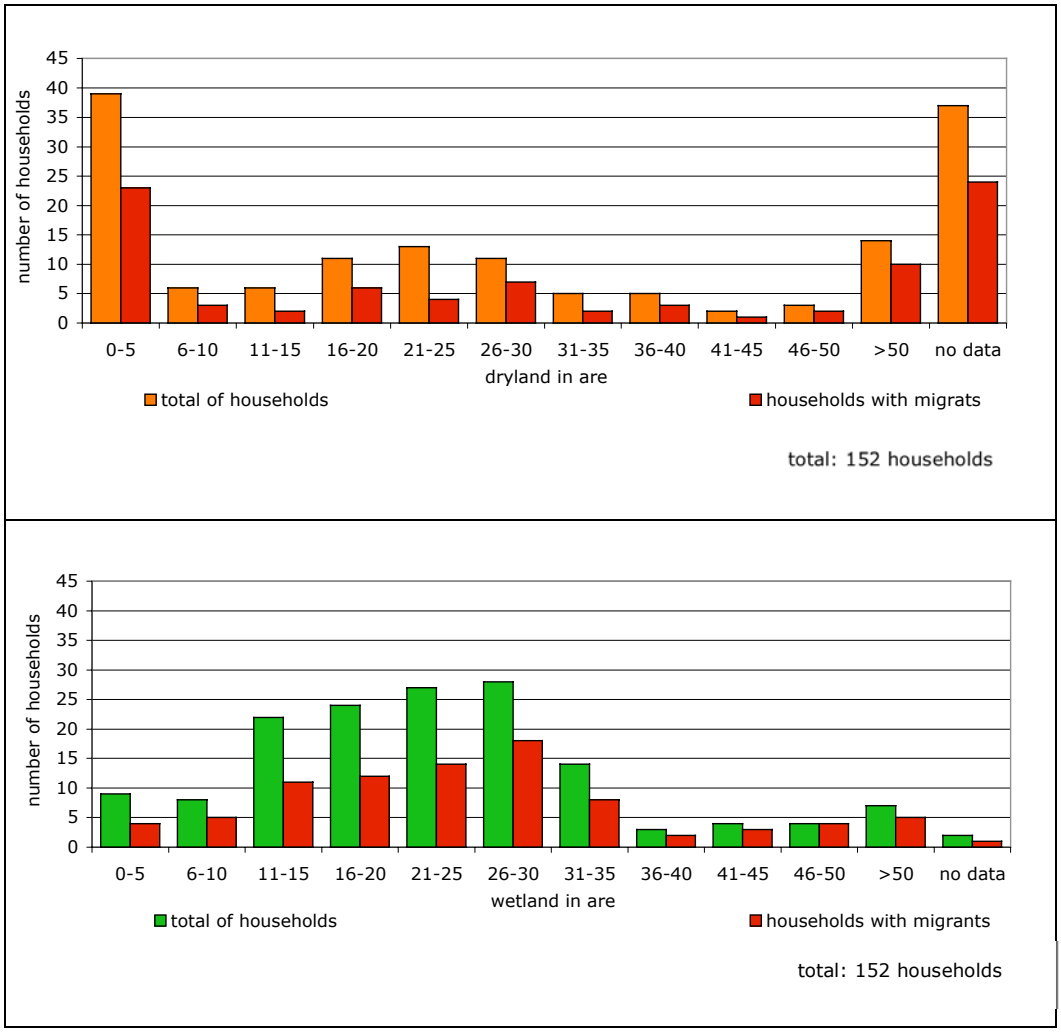
Because land is one of the limiting factors for households in Sai and Boz Adyr, it was assumed that land distribution would have an influence on decisions if household members should migrate or not (see Figure 8 and Figure 9).

Figure 8: Land Distribution and Share of Households with Migrants in Sai



Source: Rohner, 2004.

Figure 9: Land Distribution and Share of Households with Migrants in Boz Adyr



Source: Rohner, 2004.

In Sai slightly more than half of the households, which fall in the highest or lowest groups in respect of land resources, are migrant households. The middle categories still have a share between 25% and 43% of the households with migrants. Also in Boz Adyr only small differences between land size categories and migration could be discovered. Therefore, by comparing the size of land patches from households with at least one migrant no correlation could be detected neither in Sai nor in Boz Adyr. Thus, land distribution cannot be considered as having a significant influence on decision to migrate. Probably this is due to the fact that all households lack irrigated land and all have the same initial situation to decide to migrate for labour and additional cash income.

5.2.2 Migration of Entire Households

Looking at the map of Boz Adyr (see Map 4 the crossed houses) it is conspicuous that many households entirely left the village and no one could be met in the house. Neighbours of such households gave the information that in Boz Adyr 29 households left the village. Four households spend the summer on the *jailoo* and three households at their parents' place where they help to work on the fields. Another three households moved to Batken, one to Kara Tokoi, 10 to Bishkek, three to Russia and of two households it is not known where they went. Informants told me that in tree households the father left for Russia and the wife together with the children went to her parents, so they do not have to stay alone in the house. The houses of those households are not sold yet. Therefore, they could come back to Boz Adyr whenever they like to.
Comparable information is not available for Sai, but it is unequivocal that not as many entire households as in Boz Adyr left the village. Although after the mud stream in the year 1998 (compare chapter 4.1) several households from the 31 destroyed houses left the village and moved to Bürgöndü. Additionally it is known, that recently two families moved to Batken and one family to Bujum.

5.2.3 Influence of the Economic Situation of a Household on the Decision to Migrate - Results from the Wealth-Ranking

Table 4: Results of the Wealth-Ranking for Sai

Wealth-classes	Number of households per class	Number of households with Migrants		Number of household without Migrants	
very rich	19	1	11%	8	89%
rich	29	15	52%	14	48%
moderately rich	37	16	43%	21	57%
poor	29	17	59%	12	41%
very poor	8	1	13%	7	87%
unclassifiable	10	4	40%	6	60%
Total:	123	54	44%	69	46%

Source: Rohner, 2004.

Table 5: Results of the Wealth-Ranking for Boz Adyr

Wealth Classes	Number of households per class	Number of households with migrants		Number of households without migrants	
very rich	14	4	29%	10	71%
rich	37	22	59%	15	41%
moderately rich	39	27	69%	12	31%
poor	36	24	67%	12	33%
very poor	13	3	23%	10	77%
unclassifiable	13	7	46%	6	54%
Total:	152	87	57%	65	43%

Source: Rohner, 2004.

On closer examination of Table 4 and Table 5 it is obvious that the richest and poorest categories of households in the village migrate less than the middle classes in Sai and Boz Adyr. In Sai just 11% of the very rich categories and 13% of the very poor categories are households with migrants in contrast to the middle classes containing between 40% and 60% of migrant-households. In Boz Adyr the results are similar. In the lowest and highest wealth classes there are 29% respectively 23% of households with migrants and from the middle wealth classes clearly more, with 59%, 69% and 67% of migrant-households.
This phenomenon can also be found in other studies and is widely discussed (Rogaly 2003; de Haan et al. 2002, 49; McDowell and Haan 1997, 21; Boyd 1989).

The result that members of middle class households are migrating the most is in accordance with the theory of the relative deprivation (Stark and Bloom 1985, 173-174; Pries 2001, 15), which states that households cope with the strategy of migration to

reduce or avoid occurrence of relative deprivation compared to their social reference group. Therefore, households send workers abroad not only to improve income in absolute terms, but also to increase income relative to other households. This explains why households in social transition, which are represented most in the middle class, have stronger intention to diversify their income with the strategy of migration.
Because of the strenuous nature of work, the often dangerous and difficult living conditions and health risks, as well as the subordination involved in employer-employee relations and vulnerability to exploitation, some workers see migration as part of a struggle to stay put. Especially seasonal migration, which is most practised by the people of Sai and Boz Adyr, involves arduous work, and difficult and often dangerous journeys. Those who can afford not to migrate because they have sufficient income from on-farm or off-farm[1] labour are very unlikely to do so. They are not forced to take the risk to migrate (Rogaly 2003, 624-625).
Household survival mechanisms show why migration does not always occur among the very poor categories. However, migration also requires cash for transportation, documents, food and housing in the initial stage, as well as clothing and possibly the need to replace the lost free labour. But successful migration not only depends on financial capital of a household, social capital is important as well (Thieme 2006). As it became evident from many interviews, migrants need initial support from friends and the family. Kuehnast and Dudwick (2004, 9) found out that today a new reality is emerging concerning the informal social networks in central Asia.

> *"The poor are being excluded or withdrawing from those social networks that once offered important support" (Kuehnast and Dudwick 2004, 9).*

As a result of the lacking social networks for some households it is completely not possible to afford these requirements that one of the family members can migrate abroad (Boyd 1989, 645).
The network theory states, that international migration tends to expand over time until network connections have diffused and with growing experience cost and risks of migration decrease (migration networks see chapter 5.3). Moreover, as soon as social capital expands, the migration flow should become progressively less selective and spread from the middle to the lower segments of the socio-economic hierarchy (Massey et al.1993, 450, 461). Therefore, a shift between the socio-economic classes and percentage of migrants per class can be expected as soon as migration is becoming more institutionalized in the two villages.

Wealth-classes of the village are analysed not only quantitatively but also qualitatively, how the self determined wealth classes differ from each other (see Table 6 for Boz Adyr and Table 7 for Sai). Thereby mentioned are land, livestock, houses and jobs, as well as social assets like family and kin networks. Cars and jewellery seems to have a high prestige. These are indications of migration, which are often brought home from Russia as remittances.

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[1] Off-farm labour is defined by Ellis (1998, 2000) as wage or exchange labour on other farms

Table 6: Groups of Ranks Identified by Informants in Boz Adyr (Self Determined by Informants)

Informant 1 male, *aksakal* of the village	**Informant 2** male, retired, high political position during Soviet time	**Informant 3** female, sister of *aiyl bashy*	**Informant 4** male, retired school director
5 Classes	5 Classes	4 Classes	7 Classes
very rich rich moderately rich poor very poor	very rich rich moderately rich poor very poor	very rich rich poor very poor	Very very rich very rich rich moderately rich poor very poor very very poor

Indicators of wealth by informants in Boz Adyr

very rich have a job car are all business people, have a lot of animals. **rich** car, tractor, lorry, conditions are good at home, livestock small car, own car car and sheep or goats, car and small business, wetland and car, more than 50 goats. **moderately rich** at least 10-15 goats, enough to eat, home conditions are good, property is not too abundant poor do not have extra money, live one day after the other, just few animals. **very poor** live just on *posobie*, or pension, borrow money, have a lot of small birds. the poorest: have 3 orphans in their house, do not have electricity, divorced families, drink a lot.	**very rich** build their house well, cattle, buses, cars most do business, money is circulating in their house. **rich** do not have busses houses are equal to the very rich use their cars to do taxi service, have land in other parts of Batken-good land. **moderately rich** have houses, some have old cars still working 10-15 goats at least live normal not like the poorer ones. **poor** 2-5 goats or sheep bad houses no cars no technique equipment if land is good this season they have wheat, if not they have no wheat. **very poor** do not have husband, are not able to irrigate the land, can not buy seeds and fertilizer, get money from the very to moderately rich generally: Those who live over the poverty line should eat honey, butter, 100g of meat. This should be for 1,2 and 3. But in Boz Adyr just 1 and 2 can afford it.	**very rich** never ask anything from anyone, 2-3 cars, food is good, houses are painted in the inside and rooms have wooden floors wives and daughters-in-law wear jewellery. **rich** do not ask anything from anyone, Some have cars but no animals, Others have animals but no car, have wetland, can effort to buy meat sometimes. **poor** if there is wheat they eat it, do not eat extras, 1-2 cows, no car, do not always have clothes or food, life depends on term and season, sell potatoes, apricots or animals to buy food, oil or clothes. **very poor** no own houses, if no bread they bear some days without food, go to the fields after the rich harvested already to gather the leftovers, lack always of something, most have a lot of children.	**very very rich** 20-30 animals, cars, own houses, 2-3 cows get busses or shop very rich most do not have cars (except one who drive taxi) but a lot of animals, good land, get a lorry, get enough wheat. **rich** old cars, number of animals are lower one works with currency. **moderately rich** some have cars, but drive taxi just for short distances Conditions are lower, houses are not so nice. **poor** 1-2 animals, enough to eat every day, no circulating money. **very poor** do not have animals, employed by rich people to work in the fields, live on pension. **Very very poor** husband or parents died, live on pension, do not have own house, Rich people help them.

Source: Informants from Sai, 2004.

Table 7: Groups of Ranks Identified by Informants in Sai (Self Determined by Informants)

Informant 1 male, school director	**Informant 2** female, teacher	**Informant 3** male, *aiyl bashy*
6 Classes	6 Classes	5 Classes
very rich rich moderately rich poor very poor very very poor	very rich rich moderately rich poor very poor very very poor	very rich rich moderately rich poor very poor

Indicators of wealth by informants in Sai

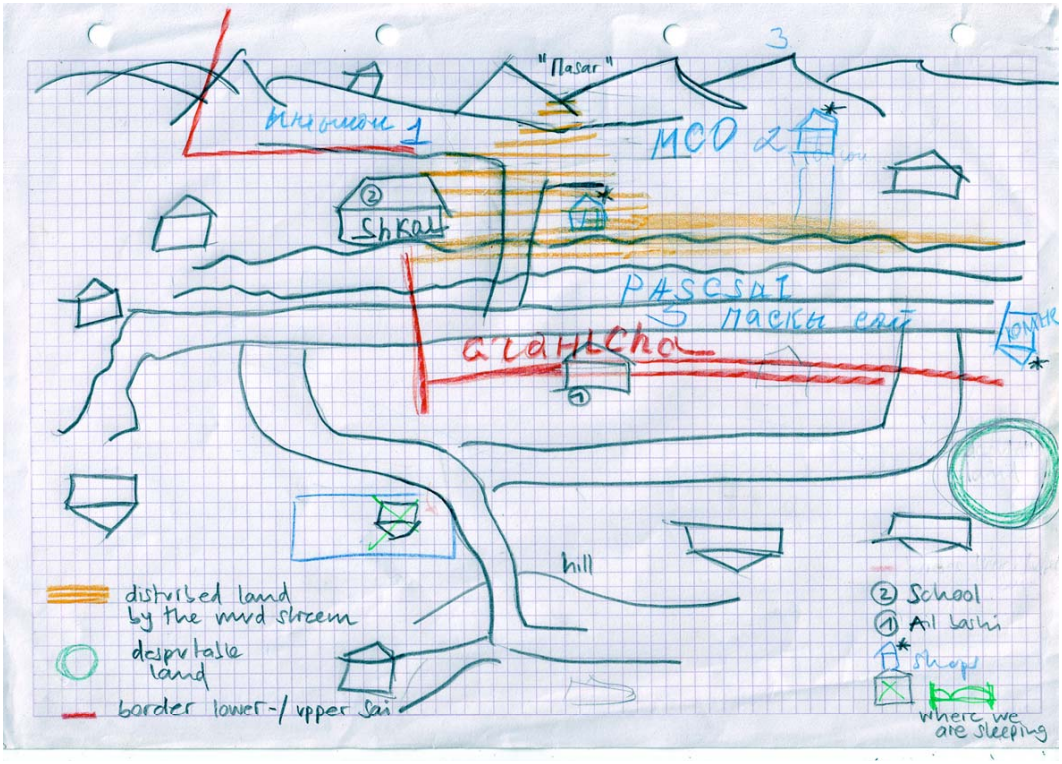
very rich two cars, two nice houses, big garden, livestock, land and water, commercial job, business, can afford to buy things with their salary that others cannot. **rich** are wealthy enough, get cars, income is enough for the family to buy clothes and food. **moderately rich** do not trade loans, can live on their own income. **poor** if agriculture is good, they are wealthy enough, if agriculture is bad they have to trade loans. it all depends on agriculture. **very poor** have to take loans, difference between poor and very poor is not so big, all had to take loans for the journey to Russia. If they bring remittances they pay their loans back, if they do not bring remittances they fall lower. If they bring a lot of money they can climb a class higher. **very very poor** always need support from government or relatives, live from somebody's budget live from everyday earnings, not homeless.	**very rich** rich from the roots (parents were rich), Kyrgyz tradition of inheritance: parents leave all the money to the youngest son, so they do not know what poverty is, New clothes every season, work day and night, can buy what they want. **rich** try to reach the "very rich" and in future they will life is rather fine, have in enough and still can help others, have mill, therefore oil and flower. **moderately rich** work hard many left for Russia, enough for them selves, can not help others. Mostly big families, what they earn is just enough for their family, some have cars. **poor** life is harder than for "moderately rich", work everywhere they can, in garden, field, etc., some migrated, but some of them failed, are lazy people, like to get money without working. **very poor** life is hard, look and hope for better life some migrated to Russia, work hard in the garden, but remain poor alcohol is the problem. often conflicts in the family and benefit runs away from them (in krg.: bereke). **very very poor** lazy people, try not to get out of their poorness, no patience, do not know how to spend the little money they earn, nowadays, poor families get money from the villagers.	**very rich** pay immediately if they collect money for social things for the village cars, livestock they live well, they can buy a car, do not have to save for it, still can eat meat. **rich** they have gardens, trees, and they really get income. Compared with the "moderately rich" they get much more income. **moderately rich** hard working,. try to live a good life, work hard to advance in their life. **poor** people who can not find themselves started their own business and failed, just start to live their own life, without parents, they are mostly youngsters. **very poor** god left them without attention, invalid people, families with many children, families with lazy children, who are not working after school, families who split, children who left for other places.

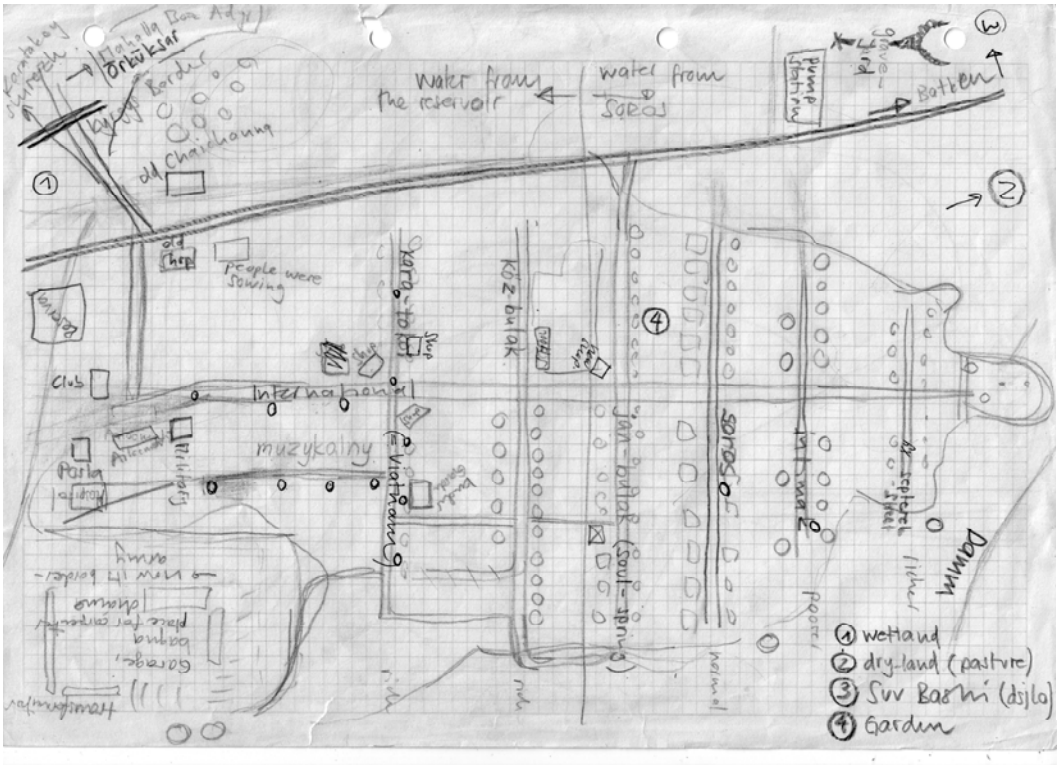
Source: Informants from Boz Adyr, 2004.

5.2.4 Social and Spatial Segregation in the Villages

Furthermore, the visual spatial output of the wealth-classes in a self-drawn map of the villages shows that there is no segregation recognizable (Map 3 for Sai and Map 4 for Boz Adyr). There are no clusters of the richest or poorest households. All wealth classes are rather regularly dispersed over the village. The same applies to the households, which adapted the strategy of migration (marked in red). This result was to be expected due to the social maps of the two villages (Map 2). Already in the discussion with the informants about choosing an appropriate social unit for the household survey, they assured, that there is no social segregation in the village. Therefore any part of the village can be chosen as a representative sample for the household survey.

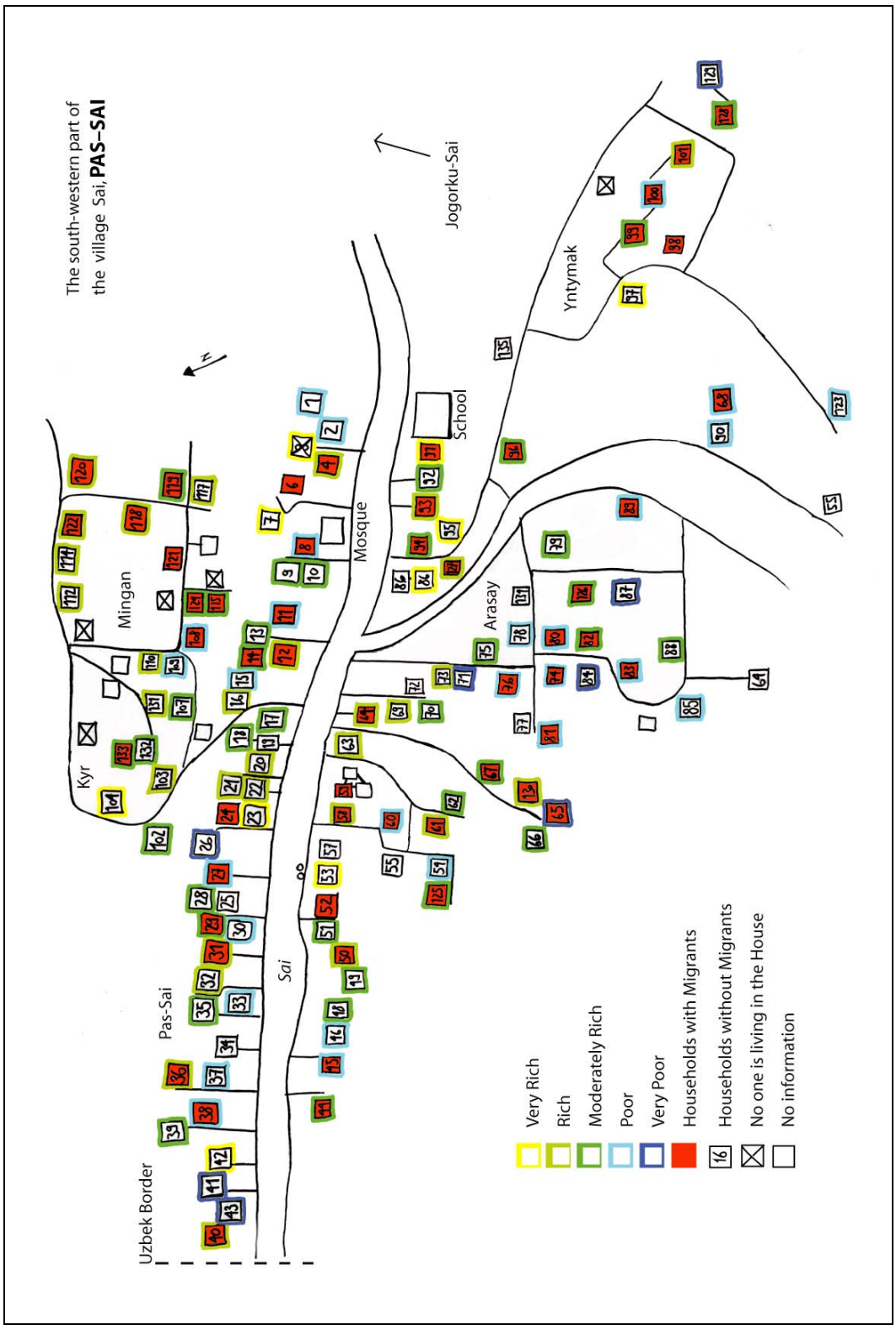
Map 2: Social Map from Sai (above) and Boz Adyr (below)





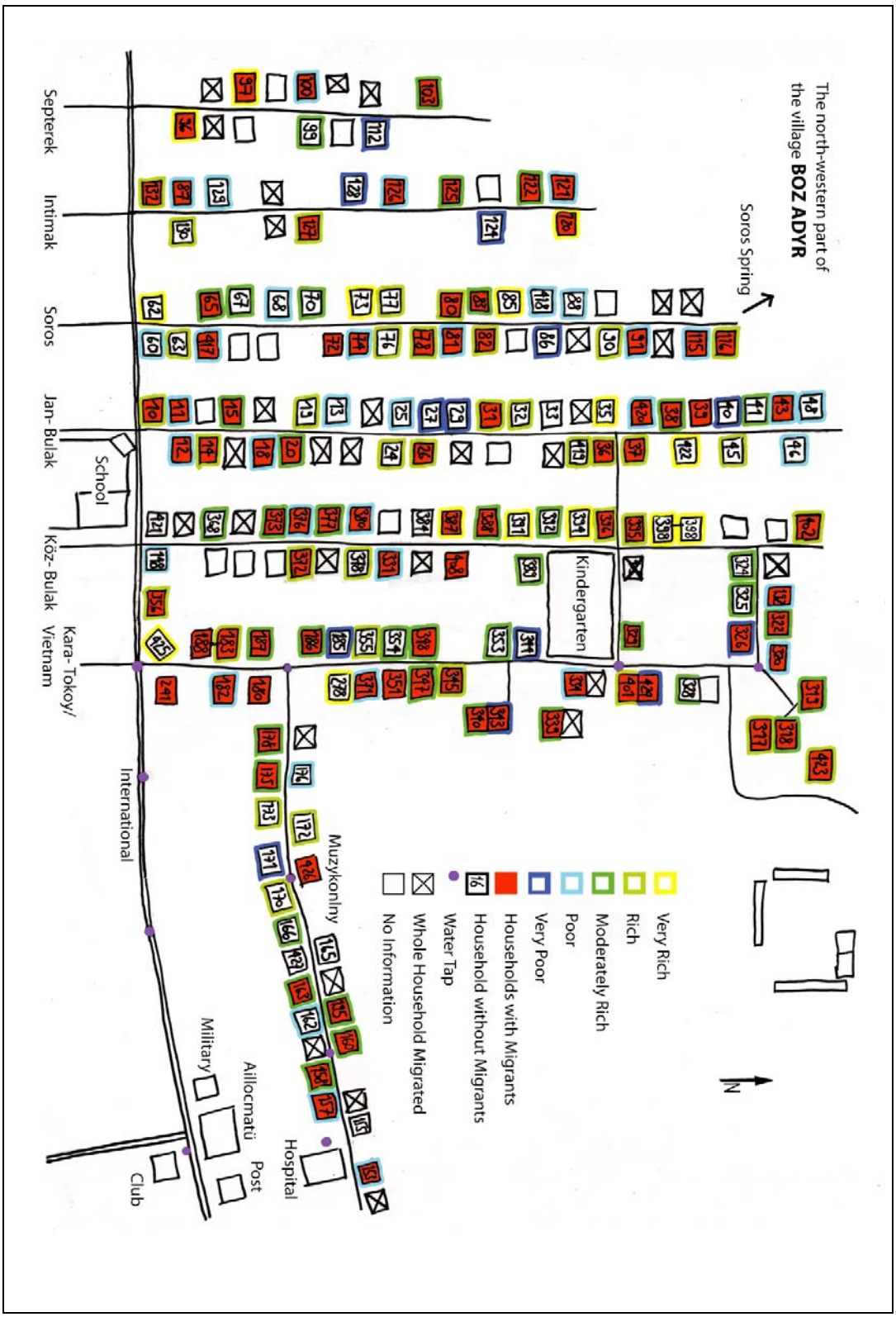
Source: Informants from Sai and Boz Adyr, 2004.

Map 3: Spatial Dispersion of Migrant Households and Wealth Classes in the South-Western Part of Sai, Pas-Sai



Source: Sketch by Rohner, 2004

Map 4: Spatial Dispersion of Migrant Households and Wealth Classes in the North-Western Part of Boz Adyr



Source: Sketch by Rohner, 2004.

5.2.5 Transformation of Wealth Classes in the Villages

Interesting thoughts were given to the question if the liberalization of Kyrgyzstan mixed up the different classes of wealth.
Informants stated that after the collapse of the Soviet Union those who got money tried to invest it, by ways of starting their own business to increase their livelihoods. But the impressions from the informants are that the richest during the Soviet time were those who are still rich nowadays and the poorest are still poor. Nevertheless, during the Soviet era differences between the richest classes and the poorest were not so large. The political system did not allow families to have more than 10 - 20 sheep. There was no category in comparison to the poorest category now. At this time it would not have been possible to create seven wealth classes, in a maximum they could define three classes (wealth-ranking, informant 1 and 4, Boz Adyr, 2004).
Informants mentioned that at the time of the collapse of socialism it was the best thing to have goods like carpets, fridge etc. in the house which could be sold in need. One informant added that he could save his family in the most difficult time right after the collapse, because he was in possession of matches. During the Soviet time one pack of matches cost 1 tin, after it cost 1 rubl (100tin = 1rubl). With few commercial goods it was possible to gain money (wealth-ranking, informant 1, Sai, 2004).
An informant from Sai described how classes were reformed with the new political situation as following:

> *"80% of the family moved to lower classes. After four years they could rise again. Most of these were migrant-families. The people who knew everything and everybody, who were good in economics, were the other 20%. They knew how to spend and economise money" (wealth-ranking, informant 3, Sai, 2004).*

Concerning migration all informants have agreed that the ranking of wealth classes is changing. Since people migrate, there has been a remarkable increase of obtainable livelihoods. Migrant families repair their houses, buy livestock, food, and cars and can afford to hold life-cycle celebrations. But migration is not just gaining well-being. The *aiyl bashy* from Boz Adyr (2004) mentioned as a negative aspect of migration:

> *"(…) some get richer, others get poorer. Not everybody can migrate".*

Some migrants were dismissed from their job in Russia without getting a salary. Others consumed too much alcohol, came back in bad health conditions or without money. After returning they have to bear the consequences of having spent money for the journey and not being able to pay back the loans taken in advance.
Similar patterns are found in the study of McDowell and Haan (1997, 21). It is stated that due to the segmentation of migration

> *"…the gains from migration may be cumulative gains – those in a better position are likely to profit more-rather than migration being balancing".*

Bracking as well (2003, 642) recognizes in her Zimbabwean case that remittances income supports both vulnerable and relatively high-income households. But she is aware that remittances contribute to the under writing of pre-existing class location, and the formation of new social hierarchies.

5.3 Labour Migration and Social Networks

Migrants' networks make international migration highly attractive as a strategy for risk diversification. Networks or the social capital of a household, seen as a complex web of social roles and interpersonal relationships can be seen as conduits of information and social and financial assistance, especially in the intra-household perspective, where migrants and non-migrants are bound together. They mediate between individual actors and larger structural forces. Furthermore, they link sending and receiving countries and they explain the continuation of migration long after the original impetus for migration has ended (Boyd 1989, 639, 657; Root and Jong 1991, 225; Thieme 2006). Previous mobility experiences help households to decide whether to adopt the strategy of migration or not. Furthermore they decide if it is possible to send a person abroad or whether their networks are supporting these processes. All these decisions and processes are based on social networks.

5.3.1 Decision-Making Process

A dominant branch of migration studies, leaded by neoclassical economists (Massey et al. 1993, 434) stresses that the decision-making process is controlled by the rationality of the migrant. The individual act according to rationality of economic self interest takes into account, for example, the expected probability of employment at the destination. Implicitly an individual cost benefit analysis took into place in the prospective migrant's mind (McDowell and de Haan 1997, 6-7; Massey et al. 1993, 434).
More recently, Stark (1991) argues in accordance with the theory of the new economics of migration (Massey et al. 1993, 436) that rationality is central, but decisions are taken in the context of the family and the household (in contrast to the common assumption of rationale action of the homo economicus model, who takes his decisions absolutely independent), and migration is seen as a form of portfolio diversification by families and households (McDowell and de Haan 1997, 7).
But however, families and households are not always harmonious decision-making units and collective strategies are not always identical to those of individuals (Boyd 1989, 657). Moreover, individual decisions to migrate do not reflect intra-household relations. As well as conflicts within households and changes to the household structure, such as a death in the family or marriage, may result in a shift from staying put to migrating or reverse (Rogaly 2003, 623-624).
Different studies (Rogaly 2003; McDowell and de Haan, 1997) challenge the very categories of migration and staying put at the level of the individual and the household. They suggest that these categorisations are not fixed, but rather change across the life course. For those who settle at their place of work albeit temporarily, the boundaries between migrating and staying put become blurred. Therefore, over an individual's lifetime, they are both a migrant and someone who remains in the home area (Rogaly 2003, 625).
In Sai and Boz Adyr most of the migrants came to the decision to seek work abroad in discussion with their household members. The opinion of the parents or the head of the household is heavily weighted where youngsters like to migrate. There are parents fos-

tering migration, because they can't see their sons redundant and lackadaisical sitting in the house, on the other hand, parents forbid their sons to migrate, because they are too scared about the conditions they will encounter. An older man proudly illustrated that he is able to give his son the possibility to explore life. However, the first and last impetus to migrate came mostly from the migrants themselves. Friends and relatives are responsible for the step to take such an idea of migration into consideration and to get the courage for realisation. Seldom a person leaves the village on his own. Mostly a group of friends or relatives are going together, one of them mostly not for the first time. Nervousness is common, migrant stories of successful returnees as well as stories of failure, accidents and death are circulating in the villages. Nevertheless, the dream of bringing remittances back home is in many cases stronger than the fear. For the extreme, migration cannot be seen as strategy anymore but rather as necessity to survive, whereby the decision-making process is diminished to survive.

Other calculations are taken into consideration for the process of decision-making for the households in Sai and Boz Adyr, which do not allow a family member to migrate. There are those whose social, cultural, economic and political exclusion make them unable to move and those who choose not to move and who subsequently stay put (Kothari 2003, 607). In these cases the optional migrant has either to help working at home in the fields, to construct a new house or is the youngest son, who has traditionally to take care of his parents. Other reason to stay put is that children are still too young to migrate and the wife does not want the health of her husband to be in risk due to migration. Several times it was mentioned that they do not have enough money to pay the initial cost or they do not like to ask for money or take the risk to borrow money. A further reason to stay at home is the lack of needed documents. Either the passport is too expensive to buy for the optional migrant or is blocked due to a deportation stamp from former migration to Russia.

Neoclassical economists mentioned, that before migrants can capture higher wage in the country of comparison, they must undertake certain investments, which include the material cost of travelling, the costs of maintenance while moving and looking for work, the effort involved in learning a new language and culture, the difficulty experienced in adapting to a new labour market and the psychological cost of cutting old ties and forging new ones (Massey et al 1993, 434).

In Boz Adyr and Sai some households do not hesitate to take the decision to send a family member abroad to fulfil dreams and wishes, which can change after life course. The purpose of youngsters from Sai and Boz Adyr to migrate is to earn money for their marriage after their return, to build a house or to buy a car. The motivation found for an older group of migrants is to buy a house for their children, to hold a life cycle celebration, to renovate the home or to start up a small business.

The reasons to migrate are found in the villages themselves as a push-factor, but also in the attraction of Russia, the pull-factor. Asking the informants "why did you/he/she want to go" the most given answer was "to earn money". Because job opportunities are very rare in Kyrgyzstan (compare chapter 4, unemployment in Batken) and salaries low (see Table 8), people see migration as alternative livelihood strategy. In regard to average wages in Kyrgyzstan, the province of Batken is at the end of the scale of the provinces (UN 2003, 56.) Therefore, the dissimilarity of wages is particularly for the people

Table 8: Monthly Average Wage by Regions (USD, exchange rate 2002 1USD = 46.92 *som*)

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Bishkek	33,8	49,8	53,2	54,0	56,0	36,5	37,1	42,3	49,6
Chui	26,1	35,2	37,9	36,2	36,6	23,0	22,7	26,6	33,1
Issyk-Kul	17,4	30,4	38,3	55,4	58,6	46,8	30,6	37,5	49,2
Naryn	19,1	29,9	33,3	30,2	33,2	20,8	19,7	23,8	28,3
Talas	17,2	24,3	25,7	24,8	25,4	15,1	15,7	18,8	23,0
Jalal-Abad	17.9	27.5	32.2	32.2	33.6	21.8	21.0	24.1	28.1
Osh	14.8	25.3	27.9	26.0	25.2	16.3	16.9	19.6	23.2
Batken	-	-	-	-	27.0	14.8	14.0	18.4	21.1
Kyrgyz Republic	**21.5**	**34.0**	**38.2**	**39.2**	**40.5**	**26.9**	**25.7**	**30.0**	**35.9**

Source: UN 2003, 56.

of the province of Batken a great reason to migrate to Bishkek or Russia. In Russia wages are expected to be about 150 - 350 USD per month (compare Table 8).
The most frequently mentioned push-factor in Sai was definitively the lack of land and in Boz Adyr the shortage of water. Other reasons to migrate are natural disasters, like the mud stream in Sai (compare chapter 4.1), bad harvests, or political disputes about irrigation water.

Next to the human capital of a household and the stimulating motivations, social networks strongly influence who migrates and where. The targeted amount of financial capital or income through labour migration gets also reflected in the choice of destinations for migration, whereby motivations and expectations to migrate overlap (chapter 5.4.1).

5.3.2 Contact to the Family and Village

As seen above, migration decision-making processes are shaped by family and friendship sources of approval, disapproval, assistance and information (Boyd 1989, 657). This is why social networks, the so called social capital, based on kinship, friendship and community ties and relationships are central in understanding migration processes and the initiation and perpetuation of migration streams. Therefore for migrants from Sai and Boz Adyr, contact to the family and village seems to be very important, especially for the family staying in place, even though the migrants mostly leave the village only for one season. The relationship between migrants and those who stay is articulated according to Kothari (2003, 607) through the establishment of networks and institutions, linking home and abroad and by sending and receiving of remittances.
Migrant workers from the villages Sai and Boz Adyr are calling their families or writing letters handed over by returnees. Calling to Sai is not possible, as the village does not have a phone line. Therefore migrants are calling to friends of their families in Batken or Hayderken and they are coming to tell the exact time when the husband or son is calling next time, so they can stand next to the phone. In Boz Adyr the system works similar, just that there is one phone at the *aiyl ökmötü* where they can call. That families call to Russia is seldom, although they mostly have a phone number from friends in the city who can look for their relatives, in case of emergency. For migrants staying in the suburbs of Moscow in the old leather factory, where conditions were excellent according to returned migrants in Boz Adyr, a budget of 100 USD per month for all em-

ployers to call home was even included. A woman from Boz Adyr elucidated with a bright smile on the face, that sometimes she knows more what happens in Moscow from returnees than her husband who is living there:

"In Boz Adyr are living good gossipers" (mother, Boz Adyr, 2004).

More interesting are the contents of the phone-conversations. Normally, it seems to be that the migrant staying abroad asks about the family, land, livestock, and if there are changes in the village, especially concerning the topic of water in Boz Adyr. Women often complain that their husbands or sons would never tell anything about themselves. They do not know a lot about the life of their sons and husbands in Russia. This is understandable since migrants do not like to talk about the risky work and bad conditions they come across. They do not want their families to worry about them. Probably they are also ashamed of their degrading, illegal, and risky jobs. These findings back the assertion of dual labour market theory that migrants accept bottom-level jobs they would never accept at home. For a migrant employment is often reduced solely to income. He may realise that that a foreign job is of low status abroad, but he does not identify himself with the receiving society. As returnee he will gain honour and prestige in his village of origin, telling about foreign labour and carried remittances (Massey et al. 1993, 441-442).

One common reason to call home is when the migrant is sending remittances back home. In this case, calls to tell the family that money is ready to be picked up at the bank or by friends.

One villager from Boz Adyr, who arranges jobs for his friends waiting to get called in Boz Adyr, has got a mobile phone with him, which allows him to have close contact and helps simplify the organisation.

The persons migrating internally mostly stay in contact by telephone. Almost everyone knows someone in Bishkek to call. Those internal migrants also come more often home for short visits or their wife or parents go to visit them. It is easier, because no passport is need. Even visiting relatives in Bishkek is possible if they can afford the bus ticket.

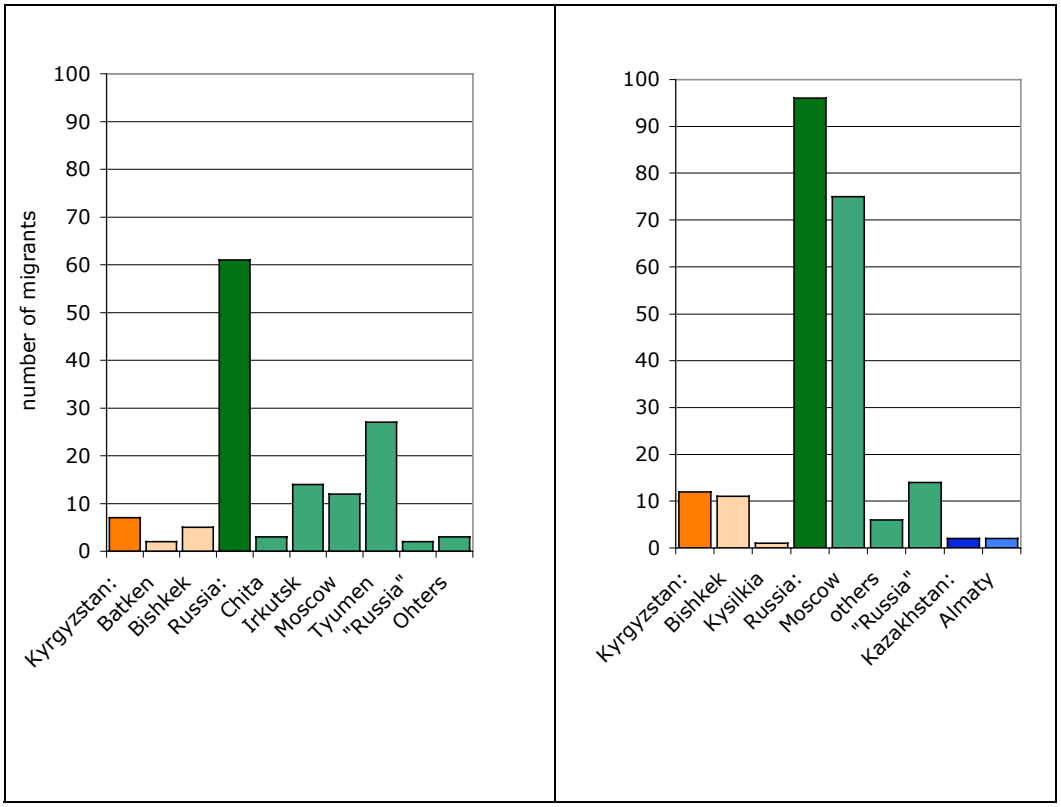
5.4 Working and Living Abroad

5.4.1 Destination and Organisation of Migration

The decision where to migrate to depends on the following factors:

- Social capital: the local network and network abroad;
- Financial capital: the possibilities to invest in initial cost of migration as well as the dreams of the outcome of the migration;
- Institutional restriction: passport and residence permission when crossing the borders, locals organize the procedure of migration, because of absence of official organisation.

Figure 10: Destination of Migrants from Sai (left) and Boz Adyr (right)



"Russia": Somewhere in Russia, the informant did not know city or region in Russia.
others: Minimum one migrant worker from Sai is going to Ulan Ude, Saratov or Yakutsk and less than two migrants from Boz Adyr are leaving to Tyumen, Sverdlovsk, Irkutsk, Novosibirsk or St. Petersburg.

Source: Rohner, 2004.

The 68 migrants (2003 - 2004) from Sai targeted just two countries of destination. Either they migrated internally in Kyrgyzstan to the provincial capital of Batken or to the capital of Bishkek or – like most of them – migrated to various regions in the Russian Federation. The most popular city in Russia seems to be Tyumen, fallowed by Irkutsk and Moscow.
The largest share, 88% of all migrant workers (total: 109 migrants in 2003 - 2004) from Boz Adyr left for Russia, 2% for Kazakhstan and 11% did not cross the Kyrgyz border. Conspicuous is that all internal migrants, except one, left for Bishkek and 78% from those who left for Russia went to Moscow. Just 4% of migrants changed the place of destination from earlier sojourns, and moved from Tyumen or Bishkek over to Moscow.

Apart from Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Kazakhstan other countries were not considered as possible destinations to migrate to in both villages. The choice of these destinations reflects the outlined migration patterns on national scale (chapter 3.4.1). The Russian Federation is with about 300'000 - 500'000 migrants (Roundtable Discussion, Migration Service Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2004; IRIN 2003a) the most frequently visited country, followed by Kazakhstan (50'000 - 120'000 migrants), England (10'000 Kyrgyz) (Toralieva 2005) and Korea

(Roundtable Discussion, Migration Service Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2004; IRIN 2004).
For villagers migrating internally the reason why almost everybody leaves for Bishkek is obvious. A woman from Boz Adyr illustrated:

> *"…we have a friend in Issyk-Kul who offered my son to work in the fields. But the salary wasn't good, so the following he went to work in a bread-factory in Bishkek. My husband followed him to Bishkek and they are now working together in a construction company. It is the same work in Bishkek and Russia – construction work. They wanted to take loans to seek work in Russia, but I didn't allow it. I'm too much afraid that the loans will rise fast" (mother, Boz Adyr, 2004).*

Which city migrants favour in Russia depends on friends or relatives who know the circumstances there because of former migration. The consistent choice of the same destination confirms the importance of the network theory that underlines the perpetuation of migration (Massey et al. 1993, 448). Interpersonal ties increase the likelihood to move to the same destination, lower the costs and risks and therefore encourage circular and cumulative migration.
Furthermore, factors like calculation of transportation cost (Irkutsk 4000 - 6000 *som*, Tyumen 3500 - 4000 *som*, Moscow 6000 *som*, Chita 5'000 - 6'000 *som*), pocket money for the journey (1500 - 2500 *som* depending on how long the migrant is on the road) are important factors too. For example, travelling to Tyumen takes two days and to Moscow and Chita six days. Wage and job opportunities in the city of arrival and the strictness of police controls in the different cities are further factors taken into account. Migrants are calculating that the journey to Moscow is more expensive and longer than to Tyumen. Also the police controls are the strictest around Moscow. But there is no doubt that the wages are the highest in Moscow. A man (Boz Adyr, 2004) mentioned:

> *"Why Moscow? There is a lot of construction work and the salary is high. Nowhere you get more money for the same job as in Moscow. Furthermore, everybody from Boz Adyr is going to Moscow, they know each other there. One of them even has a mobile phone and he plays the role of phone centre" (Asilbek, Boz Adyr, 2004).*

Massey et al. (1993, 435) argues that within the neoclassic micro theory a potential migrant goes to where the expected net returns to migration are the greatest. Furthermore they write:

> *"…before they can capture the higher wages associated with greater labour productivity they must undertake certain investments, which include the material cost of travelling, the costs of maintenance while moving and looking for work, the effort involved in learning a new language and culture, the difficulty experienced in adapting to a new labour market, and the psychological cost of cutting old ties and forging new ones" (Massey et al. 1993, 434).*

Map 5: Distances of Destinations in Russia

Source: University of Texas (2004), modified by Rohner, 2004.

A migrant seldom leaves on his own, unchaperoned by friends or relatives, without knowledge of the place of destination. The decision taken where to go is not always fix and changes can even occur on the way to Russia. A wife reported that

> *"…first he [husband] thought to go to Irkutsk. I was really surprised when I later got a call from Tyumen. On the way he met someone going there. He just joined him. This was coincidence and destiny" (mother, Sai, 2004).*

In Boz Adyr for many people the decision-making process and choice of destination was relieved and accelerated, because they all got organized work in 2003 in the suburbs of Moscow by a villager named Asilbek[1]. He became the possibility to arrange for 300 people from Boz Adyr a job to renovate an old leather factory for opening a new hunting and sports shop. In the year 2004 they got support by another villager, Kulubek[2], who coordinated jobs for people from Boz Adyr. He could not offer work for all at the same construction side, but if he found job opportunities for some people he called to Boz Adyr, where willing migrants were ready to start immediately. Asilbek and Kulubek never demanded money from the villagers for their placement. They just took the "law into their own hands" because of the absence of institutions responsible for organising work and accommodation abroad.

[1] In respect to the informant the original name is replaced.

[2] In respect to the informant the original name is replaced.

A few migrants stay in contact with former employers in Russia, whom they call at regular intervals.

> *"If they have free vacancies they take the chance and leave for the agreed dates. They have people whom they know. Before they come back to Sai, they try to arrange work for the next year. They also call from here to get confirmed if there is work. If they are sure to find work they leave" (mother, Sai, 2004).*

Other migrants have friends or relatives abroad, who invite them to work.
Hardly you find a woman who is ready to leave the village alone. Women always accompany their husbands and try to seek work in the area where their husbands work and live or take care of daily housework.

5.4.2 Duration of Stay Abroad

Seasonal migrants[1] are by definition migrant workers whose work by its character is dependent on seasonal conditions and is performed only during part of the year (IOM 2004, 3). In which way seasonal migration can be observed in Sai and Boz Adyr is elaborated in the following chapter and is summarised by a villager from Sai (2004):

> *"In summer they leave the village for Russia, and in winter they come back, and sleep like bears" (school director, Sai, 2004).*

In both villages the oscillation of the number of migrants abroad finds its peak in summer time (compare Figure 11 and Figure 12). This can mainly be explained by the employment of the migrant workers in the construction sector in Russia. Because of the harsh climate it is not possible to do construction work in wintertime. A second determining factor is how much money they want to earn in exchange to the risk they are willing to take. A third reason, closely related to the natural capital of a household, is, that most of the migrants leave the village after seeding and they come back in autumn for harvest, to support their families staying put. During winter there is nothing to do in the snow-covered villages. In Boz Adyr the cold wind blows over the plain and Sai is most of the time cut off the outside world due to a lot of snow. In both villages people have to go with their donkeys to the spring or river to get drinking water, because the canals are frozen. If it is necessary they sell carrots, potatoes and dried fruit to live on for the next weeks.

> *"There is no other job – there is no sovkhoz, kolkhoz anymore – all collapsed. At the time when we worked for the sovkhoz, we still had to look after the livestock during the winter. But today only children who have to go to school and the people who have a state-job can do something. The others do not have anything to do" (father, Sai, 2004).*

Therefore, when no work is to be done, the villagers relax and sit in rata together with friends, heating the stove with expensive wood bought from Uzbekistan or dried cow dung. An interviewee accounted:

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[1] Seasonal migration is described in Art. 2(2)(b) in the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990 (IOM 2004, 3).

"My youngest son came back in August for harvesting the crop and because he missed Sai and the fruits very much. Every time they say it was for the last time they left for Russia, but when spring comes they leave again (grandmother, Sai, 2004)".

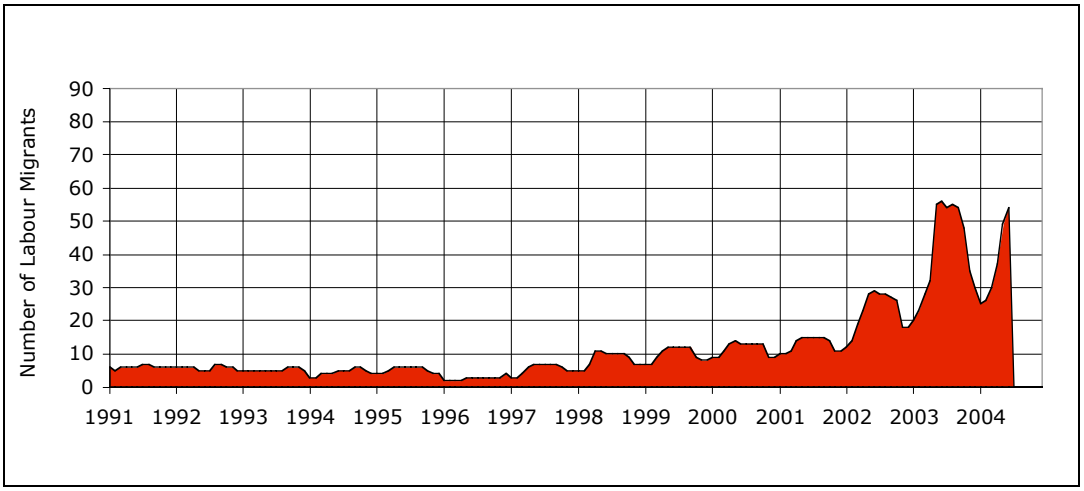
Two reasons to stay longer in Russia are either that the migrant worker could not earn as much money as he wished to bring back or he could find a job where he could work inside a heated house. A woman from Sai mentioned:

"If they stay for longer, over a year, they have to marry there, so that someone cooks and washes for them. This happened to several women left back in the village. That's the reason why my husband is coming back every year (…). I'm not afraid he isn't coming back. He is too afraid of the cold winter in Russia" (mother, Sai, 2004).

Those people migrating internally, in Kyrgyzstan, normally stay away for longer periods. They have more often the possibility to visit the village, if they can afford the travel expenditure.

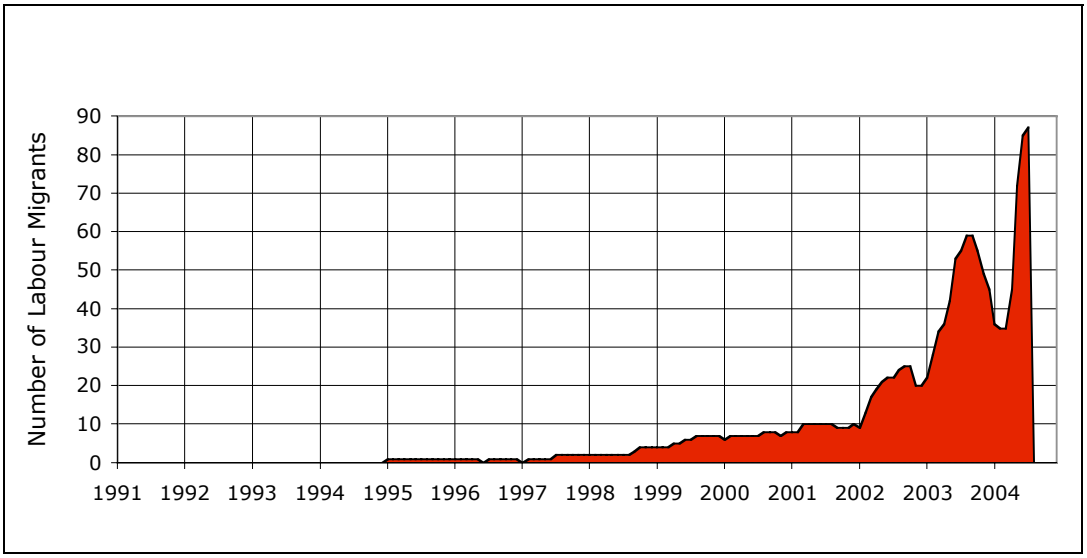
In Sai, already during Soviet time people migrated to sell fruit at the markets or to work in mines in Russia. Since 1998 there is an increase of migration observable. This can mainly be explained by the mud stream of spring 1998, which destroyed many gardens and houses. Once people started to migrate and to bring remittances back home, neighbours and friends followed closely and adapted the strategy themselves.

Figure 11: Fluctuation of Labour Migration in Sai from 1991 to 2004



Source: Rohner, 2004.

Figure 12: Fluctuation of Labour Migration in Boz Adyr from 1991 to 2004



Source: Rohner, 2004.

In Boz Adyr the number of migrant workers is increasing fast. The first migrants are dated in the year of 1995[1] and a slight increase is notable in 2002, which means that Boz Adyr limps four years behind Sai. In the year 2003 a vast ascent is remarkable. This is the year were Asilbek[2] arranged jobs to renovate a former leather factory for 300 villagers in the suburbs of Moscow (see chapter 5.4.1).
This increase of migrants since 1991 confirms the significance of the social networks in perpetuating migration. Interpersonal ties connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants at their places of origin and destination, which reduce costs and risks and therefore encourage circular, cumulative and chain migration (Massey et al. 1993, 448; Haug 2000, 19). This is accompanied by the theory of cumulative causation which states that that migration sustains itself and makes additional movement progressively more likely over time (Massey et al. 1993, 451).

Why people from Boz Adyr started to migrate later than in other villages is not fully clear. The *aiyl bashy* assumes that it is linked to the fact that Boz Adyr was the administrative centre and cattle-breeding farm of the "1st Maya" *sovkhoz* and was for a long time a very busy village, where people did not think about migrating.
Others alleged that the reason is the shortage of water:

> *"Water was for free and there was enough of it. They could plant potatoes twice. The land was satisfying them. Now they have started to go to the market and to migrate to Russia. Probably the motor of the pump is not strong enough or there is just less water. I don't know" (grandfather, Boz Adyr, 2004).*

[1] At the first day of arrival in the village of Boz Adyr my supervisor and I had the luck that exactly the man known as first migrant worker from Boz Adyr was our taxi driver.
[2] The name of the man organizing jobs for the villagers from Boz Adyr is replaced.

That people just did not have the idea to migrate is illustrated in the following quote of a man from Boz Adyr (2004):

> *"No one was thinking of it. Last year Asilbek called all the people. He was the first to try and was successful. The Tajiks in Uzbekistan already have been migrating for 10 years. They live better. Since 2003 a lot of people are working in Chui, doing agriculture there. No one was thinking of going there before, it doesn't seem that there is a real chance to earn money there" (father, Boz Adyr, 2004).*

The study of McDowell and de Haan (1997, 18) presents a clear indication of the correlation of shortage of the natural capital of the villages and households, respectively its depletion and seasonal migration like it is detected in the villages Sai and Boz Adyr. They are convinced that the Boserupian theory of agriculture, where rapid population growth and perceived overcrowding is a major cause of natural resource depletion, or a prerequisite for technological innovation in agriculture continues, change overlooked out-migration as one conceivable response to population pressure.

> *"Evidence suggests", they added, "that migration under conditions of overcrowding and resource depletion, unless in extremis, tends to build (...) in particular [on] patterns of seasonal migration" (McDowell and de Haan 1997, 18).*

5.4.3 Financing Migration

Households with migrants do not only need human capital to make migration possible, but also financial capital is demanded. Initial money for passport procurement, other documents, transportation and living expenditures after arriving has to be placed at the migrants disposal.
To finance migration, the followings four – often used in combination – ways were found in the case of Sai and Boz Adyr:

- Loans;
- Selling livestock or agriculture output;
- Support from other migrants;
- Savings.

Households generally try to avoid taking loans. Mostly because they are ashamed to ask someone for money, they are afraid of increasing interests or they would not know any person to ask because of missing social networks. However, most of the households are forced to take a loan. Almost half of the interviewed households from Sai and Boz Adyr had to take loans. First of all they ask in the family to borrow money, afterwards close friends or people form the village, to whom they often have to pay interest. Sometimes they even have to pay between 10 - 25% interest per month. Therefore, they all try to pay back the loans as soon as they receive the first remittances.
However, households which do not take loans often, have to sell a calf or cow or agricultural goods to get money for migration. Others could save money from their salary or from earlier migration. A few get money sent by relatives who are already working in Russia. An informant from Sai (2004) explained the complicated way how they could finance the initial cost of migration for her husband:

"In 1998 he [husband] went to Irkutsk to build houses and he brought back a car. He drove his car for 2 years but in 2000 he sold it because the car wasn't profitable. He bought a cow and the rest of the money he used for the journey to Tyumen. Last time when he left he took four guys to Tyumen, organized them a job there and they had to pay him the journey. But he had to pay it back to them. This year he went later as usual, because he didn't have money for the journey. But his brother sent him money from Tyumen. So, he could finally go" (mother, Sai, 2004).

5.4.4 Employment

11% of the migrant workers from Sai and Boz Adyr are doing business at the markets of Bishkek or Chita, Russia. Those migrants working at the markets are engaged as loaders or are selling goods like clothes, bought together with friend relatively cheap in big quantities. Others work as teachers, cooks, singers in Bishkek, guardians or in agriculture. The job of some labour migrants is unknown due to missing data or to the fact that the person interviewed in the village did not know where the migrant from the household was working. About 78%, the biggest share of the migrant workers from Sai and Boz Adyr are involved in the construction sector. Tyumen and Moscow are the most frequently visited cities for constructors, where they build private houses, summer residences, *banya*, garages, fundaments and large-scale industrial and administrative buildings. They try to find work independently or by help of their friends and relatives. When migration networks are well developed, they put a destination job within easy reach of most community members and make emigration a reliable and secure source of income. Eventually, networks are making it virtually risk-free and costless to diversify household labour allocations through emigration (Massey et al. 1993, 449). Not all of them got the chances like those in Boz Adyr, where a villager made a big haul. Often three to ten people are working together at one construction site. At least one person must be experienced and has to lead the others. Often they are working between ten to 16 hours per day, until the last power is gone. In most cases the migrants do not have working permissions nor proper contracts. Despite their low cost, the Kyrgyz illegal workers are frequently cheated out of their wages. They may be paid less than agreed, or partly in food, or, if the contract was in dollars, at an underestimated dollar exchange rate. In some cases the employer refused to pay at all.

"He didn't know which kind of work he would do before he left. He just went. In Moscow there are different people in terms of how they work. They are lying. After four months he escaped, because the boss didn't give him any money. Ten people worked there together from Boz Adyr and didn't get money and escaped. He earned nothing in these four months. Afterwards they went to work in another place. One month later he called home and sent 200 USD. He worked there for tow months. Per month he got 200 USD, altogether 400 USD. He doesn't like to go back, he didn't like it. He would never go back and try it again. He is very disappointed. Just if there were a guarantee he might go again" (mother, Boz Adyr, 2004).

Wages of migrant workers are difficult to estimate. Either a returnee was staying at home during the interviews and could tell the amount he earned or the family members estimated it on the basis of the remittances. Wages for work abroad vary between 200

USD and 350 USD. A waitress accounted that she had earned 250 USD in Moscow and that delicious food was included. The people working in the former leather factory got between 200 and 350 USD, depending on how hard their job was. An interviewee from Sai thought that it depended on skills too, because her husband is experienced in construction business and is leading a working group in Tyumen.

> *"I don't know how much he [husband] is earning there. I think that he earns more than others. It depends on the skill a person has" (mother, Sai, 2004).*

However, wages are much more in Russia than in Kyrgyzstan. To compare, the *aiyl bashy* in Boz Adyr, who is the most important person in the village, earns 90 USD per month or a teacher earns between 25 and 40 USD per month.
Many voices asserted that Kyrgyz people do not have the hardest lot in Russia. Normally they stay in good contact with Russians and at the job market they have a privileged position compared to Uzbeks of Tashiks, Chechens and Azerbaijani (the so called coca-countries). Kimmage (2004) approves this finding:

> *„Migrant workers are also victims of violence. Among the migrants, the Tajiks are on the lowest rung of the hierarchy. They do the hardest and lowest-paid work, which no one else will do. They silently endure the arbitrary injustice of employers (…)".*

5.4.5 Living Abroad

It is quite rare that migrant workers can afford to rent a room. They are really lucky if they have relatives living in Russia where they can stay. The most common way, however, especially for construction workers, is to live on the construction site. The living standard is usually at an absolute minimum. Places are dirty from the construction work, and normally there is neither running water nor electricity. Migrants fear for their health because of humidity in such places and because of lacking hygiene. But some say they can be happy to have a shelter. In Sai the story is circulating that other constructors lived for the whole summer in the forest next to the construction site.
A co-villager from Boz Adyr organized for 300 villagers jobs in a former leather factory in the suburbs of Moscow (see chapter 5.4.1), where they had excellent living conditions. Because it was difficult to organize accommodation for all of the workers, they lived at the construction site, where infrastructure - shower, toilets, telephone - was great. They even employed three doctors from Boz Adyr to check the workers health, people to clean and to prepare food for. Men even allowed their wives to come, and to do equitable paid work like painting window frames, cooking or washing. Everybody agreed:

> *"Very good conditions, free of charge! To find another company like this in Russia is impossible, conditions and salary can never be the same" (informants, Boz Adyr, 2004).*

5.5 Summary of the Patterns of Labour Migration

The domestic unit, as a sustenance and socializing unit, as Boyd (1989, 642) argues, is an important component in social network based migration. The motivation and ability to migrate as well as the pattern of migration are influenced by household size, age, gender structure and its stage of life-cycle – the human capital of a household. In both villages Sai and Boz Adyr predominantly young men had migrated – over 90% of all migrants were men. The working-age population is the most active when it comes to migration. According to Root and de Jong (1991, 225) a higher migration rate for villagers with higher education was expected, but could not be declared as significant for the study sites. People left the village without having a profession or alternative nor perspective of employment.

De Haan et al. (2002, 44) states that movements are closely related to household management and demographic cycles, like it is also the case in the two villages. The dynamics of intra-household relations influence and are influenced by migrating and staying put. The ways in which ideologies are deployed in negotiation and contests over who migrates and who does not is related to the way the household is organized (de Haan and Rogaly 2002, 7). In awareness that the household will have to bear the loss of working power, migration can be seen as supplementary livelihood strategy especially in extended households. In part this is related to household structure, including the ratio of dependents to workers. Large number of dependents means that whoever is earning an income or producing a crop has more mouths to feed. Moreover, schooling costs increase as children grow older (Rogaly 2003, 628). Therefore, while analysing migration patterns, it figured out that people from extended households are more ready to migrate.

Some young men from the villages view migration as a means of belonging to their peer group, temporary escape out of the pressure of family responsibilities or demonstrating independence from parents (de Haan and Rogaly 2002, 7). Dreams of a house, car, livestock or nice bride, respectively holding a life-cycle celebration stimulate the decision to migrate. Households act as income pooling units where the decision about migration or non-migration of its members is taken collectively (Massey et al. 1993, 439; Faist 1997, 199). In discussion with the household the decision-making process is beginning to take shape, even though the last impetus is coming from the optional migrant or the head of the household itself.

In Sai 38% of 123 households and in Boz Adyr 57% of 152 households cope their livelihoods with the strategy of migration. Areas of arrival of the migrants from the two villages represent the same patterns of entire Kyrgyzstan – villagers are migrating internal of Kyrgyzstan or are leaving to Russia and few to Kazakhstan.

Land as a limiting factor in the study area could not be considered as having a significant influence on the decision on migration. No correlation could be detected between migration and land possession as the natural capital of a household. Nevertheless, the rhythm of migration is closely related to the climate. In both villages the oscillations of the number of migrants abroad find their peak in summer, when the work on the field is done and the weather allows construction work in Russia, where most of the migrants are employed.

Examination of the financial capital of households shows that the richest and poorest categories of households in the villages are less migrating than the middle classes. This can be closely connected with the social capital of the household, where Kuehnast and Dudwick (2004, 9) see an exclusion of the poor households of the social network what makes migration impossible. The households deciding that a family member has to migrate finance the initial stage of migration by taking loans, selling livestock or agriculture output, asking for support from other migrants or the family has to use their own savings.

Although migration is still not or only rarely institutionalised officially and on national-administrative scale, people by themselves started institutionalizing migration informally. Villagers, especially in Boz Adyr, took the law into their own hands and helped organizing the migration for other villagers to reduce cost and risk. Thus, social networks are needed and provide support for information about where work is available, where other people from the same place are living and working and on the likely terms of conditions that are to be found (de Haan and Rogaly 2002, 8-9). Few migrants could develop their own network and are still in contact with former employers in Russia. Contact to the family, to the village as well as to the area of migration resulted to be important to increase social capital. This is emphasised by the network theory, stating that migrant networks lower costs and risks of migration and increase its expected net returns (Massey et al. 1993, 448). Many men left in groups, often comprising one first-time migrant and one more experienced migrant. However, networks are not limited to identity but also include the construction of contracts and expectations of reciprocal action (de Haan and Rogaly 2002, 9).

6 Labour Migration as a Livelihood Strategy and its Social and Economic Impacts on People's Life

Migration to Russia requires a registration and legal employment, which migrants often do not possess and therefore get into conflicts with the law. Illness and accidents due to mouldy conditions at migrants' working and living places measure twice the opportunity costs against the expected benefits and impact of labour migration, even though not all remittances and impacts of migration are quantifiable. Nonetheless, remittances generated by international labour migration are a crucial source of income for migrant families as well as for the economies of the rural region of Batken *oblast* and is one of the increasing livelihood strategy of the villagers from Sai and Boz Adyr.

6.1 Economic Impacts of Labour Migration

Remittances, or the transfer of cash or other resources from migrants to their kin at their rural place of origin, play an important role in the family-linked migration process in developing countries (Stark 1991, 217). As shown in chapter 5.4.3 the needed financial capital is often the primary incentive for households to adapt the strategy of national or international labour migration and financial capital, next to social and human capital, is one of its outcomes, in form of remittances as well.

In literature (Ellis 2000; Stark 1991; Regmi and Tisdell 2003) the question is discussed, why migrants maintain the flow of remittances to their families. Altruism of migrants towards their household is probably not a driving force for migrants to remit. Moreover, Regmi and Tisdell (2002, 87-88) identify self-interest as the main motivation of migrants to remit to their families. Possibilities for inheritance, degree of family attachment, likelihood of eventual return to place of origin, and family investment in the education of the migrants are found to be significant influences on levels of remittances.

The following two chapters explore the remitting behaviour of Kyrgyz migrants and how remittances are used by their families at their rural place of origin.

6.1.1 Remitting Behaviour

The remitting behaviour of migrant workers from Sai and Boz Adyr is difficult to explore. The process of remitting is not well organized, and the amount of remittances is difficult to detect. Usually the migrant worker is sending money back home in several parts and the households often do not have an overview of the total sum. Additionally, the migrant worker brings home money and goods personally at the end of the season (see next chapter 6.1.2).

The followings two mechanisms of transfer remittances from Russia to the village of origin do exist:

- Transfer by bank: the safest but more expensive way;
- Transfer by hand: the migrant himself or his friends carry the money in their pockets to the village.

One of the acute problems confronting the migrant workers is how to transfer their hard earned wages securely to their families back home. During the Soviet time, interviewees said, the best way to remit was by the post offices. But since this does not pose possibility anymore, they had to find a new way. First, because of lack of public trust in the banking system, the labour migrants decided to bring back the money in their own pockets or by relatives or friends going back to Kyrgyzstan.

> *"When I worked there [Tyumen] for the first time I thought to bring back all the earnings in my pocket, but on the way back I got robbed. A military man just took the money away (…). This was a lesson! This time, I will send the money back by bank" (father, Sai, 2004).*

Thus, transiting countries while carrying large sums of money exposes the migrants to a high risk of extortion, theft, intimidation and physical abuse. Money and goods may be confiscated at border-crossings and police posts. Incidents especially occur on trains and roads in Russia and Kazakhstan. A returnee from Boz Adyr added:

> *"It is safer sending the money by bank than to carry it on the body back home. And if they are sending the money, one day later the family will get it" (father, Boz Adyr, 2004).*

Migrants have experienced how vulnerable they are by carrying all their earnings to the villages and avoid exposing themselves to the risk of extortion. Therefore, today, most of the migrants are remitting through the Eco Bank or the US Company Western Union. The latter demands 12% interest and Eco Bank demands 3% of interests if the amount transferred is larger than 5'000 USD. Because the interests decrease with increasing amounts of shipped money friends usually send home money on one man's name. In order to receive the money from the bank, the beneficiary has to present an identification document and the sum of remittances. For this reason the remitter always has to call in advance to tell how much he is sending.

A migrant worker usually makes between one to four shipments per season, with amounts varying between 50 USD and 500 USD. The *aiyl bashy* from Boz Adyr mentioned that in June 2004 all migrant workers from Boz Adyr remitted together 3'200 USD by bank. He knows it exactly, because the bank from Russia is calling him to get confirmation that the recipient is living in Boz Adyr. Asilbek, the man who organized jobs for about 300 persons in the former leather factory (compare chapter 5.4.1), estimated that from all persons involved together about 750'000 USD were remitted to Boz Adyr. Notably, this means a great profit for the village. Calculating that 300 stakeholders were involved means that every person earned about 2500 USD per season (expected April to August), or about 500 USD per month. Compared to other migrant earnings in Russia this ends up in a high salary, appearing rather exaggerated.

Not all migrant workers are able to send home money regularly. Some migrants had difficulties to find a job, others were sent back by the police before they even could earn the amount of money they had spent for the journey. Stories are circulating that some workers spend all their money for alcohol or often visit the red light districts. A woman (2004) from Sai said:

> *"They [her grandson and his friend] have a difficult time there in Bishkek and they can't send money back to the village. They have to buy food. They don't have a garden like we do. And they have to pay the flat. The parents here in Sai don't even have money to buy flour to bake bread" (grandmother, Sai, 2004).*

6.1.2 Investment of Remittances

When households in the villages Sai and Boz Adyr receive a shipment from the migrants they have to choose on how to invest the money, the newly gained financial capital. Who decides how to invest the money depends on the family structure. In extended families mostly the head of the family, the grandfather or the grandparents together, decide. In nuclear families, the wife staying put can decide what is needed urgently. For bigger investments the household or the couple had already discussed the matter before the migrant left or alternatively, if possible, the family waits with spending the money until the migrant worker returns home.
Basically remittances are invested in:

- Paying back loans;
- Short-term investments: daily goods;
- Long-term investments: education, house, livestock, small business;
- Goods from Russia;
- Life-cycle celebrations.

First of all, loans taken for the initial financial impacts have to be paid back so that interests do not rise too high. Afterwards the most urgently needed items are bought, such as daily food, clothes and potatoes, wheat and fertilizer. In autumn, school material and registration fees for the college and university have to be paid. In general people in the villages attach great importance to education and parents try their best to give their children the opportunity to finish secondary school or even better, college or university). If there is any money left they invest it in renovation or construction of houses. This is especially the case if a young couple is living in the household, to allow them a separate life in their own house. Furthermore, money is invested in enlargement of livestock or in small business. In general, this involves the purchase of brand new consumer goods in bulk with the intention of reselling at a higher price at the local markets. Furthermore, potatoes are bought in autumn to store and resell them in spring for a higher price or money is invested to exchange currencies at the Uzbek market.
At the end of the season, when migrants return to their homes, they also bring back goods, which are cheaper in Russia or are not available in Kyrgyzstan. People often mentioned, that during the Soviet time there were many Russian products available in Kyrgyzstan, which they miss nowadays as they are not sold anymore. Therefore, if migrant workers are returning from Russia they bring different commodities. One of

the biggest dreams of all male migrants is to earn enough money to return in their own car. In households with migrants there is often a fancy stereo system or a television on display, even if currency is not stable at all.
Women appreciate very much if their husband brings them earrings or a necklace or just gold to mend a broken tooth as a present. Chocolate, candies, as well as clothes, which are thought to have better quality in Russia and which are rarely available in the province of Batken and are appreciated by children.

One of the most important reasons to migrate and to bring home remittances is to hold a ***toi*, a life-cycle celebration**. In the Kyrgyz Republic, as elsewhere in Central Asia, people depend on person-centred informal networks that are reaffirmed through a rich ceremonial and social life (Kuehnast and Dudwick 2004, 19). Life-cycle celebrations and rituals are pivotal encounters that help people cultivate, maintain, and expand networks through the reciprocal exchange of gifts as well as exchange of goods, information, favours and advice (Kuehnast and Dudwick 2004, 4). These reciprocal social networks give a sense of security, which the anthropologist White (1994, In: Werner 1997, 6) refers to as a „security of mutual indebtedness". The most important *tois* are the circumcision (*sünnöt-toi*), marriage of a son (*ülönü-toi*), marriage of a daughter (*kys-toi*), house warming (*üi-toi*), first child, and anniversaries – especially the 50ieth. Funerals are expensive celebrations as well, but it is not clear if they are counted as *toi*. Informants remarked that funerals have to be differentiated from *tois* in respect to the dead person, but in literature (Kuehnast and Dudwick 2004) it is listed as a *toi*.
Tois were rarely mentioned when the questions "how do you invest remittances" was asked. But in answers to the questions "what are your dreams that could be fulfilled through migration" or "what changed in your life through migration" *tois* take the most important role. About 90% of the interviewed migrant households mentioned that much has changed in regards to *tois*. More than 50% of those households could host a *toi* in the year 2003. This means great expenditures for the household (see Table 9). The others were able to participate when they were invited to celebrate a *toi*, because at least they could afford bringing a present. In Boz Adyr the *aiyl bashy* said that the number of *tois* is ascertainably increasing since people are migrating. Last year more than 30 *tois* were held in Boz Adyr.

Spendings are incredibly high to hold a *toi* or even to participate at one (see Table 9). It is a tradition that each household invited to a celebration is expected to show up with a gift. Neighbours and friends never forget what others had brought to their celebration, they even organize someone who writes a record of which presents was given by whom. It is believed that the value of what you are giving away will come back to your house at the day you are giving a *toi*. Those who give more, gain in terms of prestige and status.

> *"You should give back a present of the same value as the one your guests gave you, once you are invited to a party by them" (mother, Boz Adyr, 2004).*

Table 9: Expenditures for a *Toi* for the Host Household

	expenditures
sünnöt-toi	80'000 - 120'000 *som*
wedding-party	100'000 *som*
funeral	30'000 - 80'000 *som*

Source: Women in Sai and Boz Adyr, 2004.

Table 10: Appropriate Presents to Bring for a *Toi* to a Friend

	appropriate present
wedding-party	goat (800 - 1'000 *som*) or sheep (1'000 - 2'000 *som*)
kys-toi	Informant 1: carpet (500 - 1'000 *som*) or a new mattress (500 - 600 *som*)
	Informant 2: carpet (500 - 1'000 *som*) or a mattress (30 *som* per metre of material), for the clothes or a sheep (4'000 *som*)
sünnöt-toi	Informant 1: money or goats or sheep, and for the circumcised boy little toys
	Informant 2: animal and clothes (4'000 *som*), sheep (2'000 *som*), others (2'000 *som*)
üi-toi (house-warming)	Household equipment, furniture, TV, radio, for the head of the household a felt hat, for his wife a scarf
first-child	Cradle (600 - 1'000 *som*), pillows, mattress, children clothes

Source: Informants from Sai and Boz Adyr, 2004.

To such *tois* mostly just those persons are invited who are thought to bring an appropriate present, in the value that the host family has the possibility to give back one day. Therefore, like Kuehnast and Dudwick (2004, V) underline, life-cycle celebrations can exclude households from a different economic status. Moreover, they see an increasing socio-economic stratification of the population in Kyrgyzstan since independence, which is reflected in the polarization of networks of the poor and the non-poor. The traditional practices of gift exchange seem to have contributed to the inability of the poor to maintain wider network relations, even among family members. This also means an exclusion of the poor household to information and effective and far reaching connections which are still after independence the primary currency for gaining access to public services, jobs, and higher education (Kuehnast and Dudwick 2004, 1) and to the strategy of migration, as it resulted from the wealth-ranking in the two villages (compare chapter 5.2.3).
An informant from Boz Adyr asserted a new access to celebrations since her husband brings remittances from Russia:

> *"Today, I go to those tois where I'm invited. Before my husband migrated I had to escape sometimes, because there wasn't enough money to buy a present. (…). We never could hold our own wedding toi – we couldn't afford it" (mother, Boz Adyr, 2004).*

The expenses for celebrations are so high that many families have to borrow money, which can send them into ruin. To prevent households from exacerbating it is the *aksa-*

kals duty to issue guidelines, defining the maximum expenditures for *tois*, which should not be exceeded. When one of the two significant celebrations in the village is announced – a wedding party or a circumcision – the *aksakal* visits the host household and speaks with the family about the investment and their limits and what it means for the intra-household economic (*aksakal*, Boz Adyr, 2004).
By providing opportunities to exchange food, labour, gifts, and toasts, the celebrations are the principal social institution through which Kyrgyzstan households maintain and extend their social networks. According to Kyrgyz custom, social status and power and building or maintaining social networks is achieved largely through displays of hospitality and generosity and exchanges (Werner 1997, 5). Therefore, reasons to hold a life-cycle celebration are various. It can be fear of public shame for not holding one, need or desire for reciprocity, social advantages of feasting or the enlargement of social networks (Werner 1997, 5).

6.2 Social Impacts of Labour Migration

In regard to the illegal status of migrant workers in Russia many problems arise and fosters shocks that may cause migrants to become vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Dangerous work and poor hygiene at places of migration can have pervasive impacts on the human and social capital of household staying back in the villages. In the last chapter it is discussed if migration foster changes even on the village level by trickle-down effects.

6.2.1 Impacts on Illegality

Lack of primary financial capital, as well as human or social capital does not allow migrants to live and work legally in Russia. The migrants with limited financial capital do not have the means to pay registration fees and bribes and are vulnerable and affected in their livelihoods and in their potential outcome of migration. Since the majority of construction workers live on the building site, registration offices cannot register them at a place of residence. Working without licence means no protection against abuse and exploitation, including undocumented employment, absence of legal employment contracts, very low wages, unpaid working hours, and so on. Legislations in Russia do more harm than good for migrants from Sai and Boz Adyr within their situation. However, all of the interviewed migrant workers lived illegally in Russia.
Even the workers in the former leather factory, where conditions were excellent, worked illegally and had no registration due to missing address. Migration workers with illegal status try not to leave their place of work as police controls are severe. Whenever they wanted to visit the centre of Moscow, where control is a certainty, they bought a falsified registration for 100 *rubl* at the market. If they were caught, they just had to pay a little bribe, about another 100 *rubl*. However, out of the 300 people from Boz Adyr, three to four get caught and were sent back to Kyrgyzstan immediately, injured in their personality and in their right as migrants. The company employing illegal workers, runs a risk, too. But still, it seems to be an acceptable risk in comparison to the cost legally employed migrants would entail.

One interviewed woman was caught in Moscow and deported to Kyrgyzstan. She (mother, Sai, 2004) was working in the centre of Moscow as a masseuse. One day the police caught her and her brother in law.

"If they catch you, you have to stay at the police station for three to 15 days".

She was "lucky" and had to stay at the police station for three days only, where they had to go through unpleasant interrogation and had to pay a high penalty of 500 *rubl*. The Kyrgyz embassy was obliged to finance her return to Kyrgyzstan. After she got her passport back with a red stamp in it – deported, it remained her 10 days to leave the country. For the next years she wont be allowed to immigrate again into Russia.

The families at home, mostly the wives did not know if their husbands were staying in Russia with correct documents and least of all knew how it could be handled to work and live legally in Russia. What is more frightening is that even returnees' knowledge about getting legal status was alarmingly restricted. One returnee from Boz Adyr (2004) remarked that

"…The first time they didn't know that they were leaving illegally for Russia. But for the next time he would just buy a registration card in Moscow, a faked one in the market for about 200 som. When they arrived in Bishkek, they were informed that they needed the international page in the passport. If it was missing, they couldn't pass the border. By crossing the border, officers didn't even ask for it, because they could read the Russian page. Probably for a non-Russian speaking country it would be necessary, but for former Soviet countries it is not worth paying these 700 som only for this page. If we paid for all the documents needed, there would be no profit at the end for us. (…). But sometimes I was afraid to live illegally in Russia. It happened that I had to escape the police or once I had to change the location in order not to get caught".

One migrant from Sai explained that the easiest way to register properly is to find a so-called grandmother where you can live for little money. The old people have time to do all administrative work and are happy to have conversation and company.

6.2.2 Social Impacts on Migrant Workers' Health Conditions

People who are planning to migrate understand that strong health, seen as human capital of livelihood assets, is vital to be able to cope with the rigours of the journey, the job search and the living conditions awaiting them. Heavy, dangerous work and poor living conditions can lead to diseases, injuries and even death. In the construction sector where most Kyrgyz migrants are concentrated, the accident rates are very high. Informants mentioned that alcohol consumption is high, even on building sites, what drastically increases the danger of accidents. A man from Boz Adyr said:

"We couldn't afford to be sick. If we stayed off for just one day, we weren't paid for the whole month. Even when we were sick we went working" (father, Sai, 2004).

Other migrants pointed out that the possibility moreover to catch Tuberculosis was much higher in Russia than in Kyrgyzstan. One mother in Sai whose son migrated, who

therefore was not directly affected, mentioned, that the biggest problem was that men were bringing diseases into the marriage bed. Prostitution was welcome especially among youngsters, she mentioned.
Many migrants came home with broken arms or legs. At the time when I conducted interviews in Boz Adyr the bad news arrived that a villager had died in Russia. The village started to collect money so that the dead body could be transferred to the village for an adequate funeral.
Therefore, adapting the livelihood strategy of migration means an increasing vulnerability of the household because of illness and accidents of migrant workers fostered by poor hygiene and dangerous work.

6.2.3 Social Impacts on the Villages

Asking for the changes in the village after people started to migrate, the most often expressed opinion was:

> *„If people migrate and bring remittances it is important, but only for the households themselves" (father, Sai, 2004).*

Stark could likewise (1991, 282) not detect, whether remittances also favourably affect the distribution of income via a filtering-down effect, for example by resulting in an increased demand for the products and services of the poorest households within the village.
The *aiyl bashy* from Boz Adyr hopes that, when migration as a strategy is better implemented and households will be satisfied with their livelihoods, the village will gain more from migration than today. Already today, less households ask for social support by the village. In general, a positive change of the economic situation of the households in the village is detected. For example, when the village has to collect money for public welfare purposes, like for the freshwater pipeline in Sai, households are faster ready to pay, as well as when individuals ask for loans, because households with migrant do have cash allocated.
Positive for the village is as well, that more cars for transportations are available. In Boz Adyr and Kara Tokoi together migrant workers have brought 50 cars to the village since 2003. Many more *tois* were held compared to earlier years too, which benefits social live in the village. Furthermore households dispose of better infrastructure and have been able to enhance the hygiene. Households are proud of their newly built *banya* although water is limited and not always available.
In Sai as a negative aspect of migration was mentioned that well-educated teachers are migrating, leaving the classrooms behind. In May 2004, the only person who spoke English in the village left for Russia. Now, children from Sai have no possibility anymore to fulfil their dream to be able to speak to foreigners once in their live.
There are expectations expressed by migrant households that migrants would improve their skills. Many returnees learnt Russian during their stay abroad. Others thought to improve their situation by getting construction skills in Russia. Many returnees were disappointed concerning this expectation, because they did not find the same material

at disposal in the villages, such as wood or cement to construct houses, as they did in Russia. In general most of the jobs did not require much skill.
In Boz Adyr the consequence of migration takes a more dramatic direction. Since mainly men are absent during the hot summer months, women have to irrigate the fields themselves. They often said that their husbands had also been going during the night to steer the water to their fields when it was their turn. Women are scared and thus not able to do this work, at night. Since almost all men left the village, the control to distribute water in a fair turn fails and more conflicts among villagers arise. Conflicts even escalate over village boundaries to the enclave of Sokh. It is said that the Uzbeks, respectively Tajik inhabitants are abstracting water of the irrigation canal, which is leading water to Boz Adyr, since the men of Boz Adyr often do not control it anymore.
The villagers are about to become aware that health is one of the most important qualities of life, since many migrants are coming back sick or with broken arms or legs. Returnees also tend to consume more alcohol.

> *"They all got addicted in Russia. What can they do when work is exhausting and living conditions are as bad as they met them?" (mother, Sai, 2004).*

A woman in Boz Adyr mentioned that prices in the recently opened shop are excessive and much higher than in the older shop next to it. She thought that this happened, because migrant households can afford expensive goods know. She is afraid that soon she will not be able to buy food anymore, because prices will increase rapidly. This illustrates, like Bracking (2003, 1) found out in her Zimbabwean case as well, that remittances can also undermine the purchasing power of households without migrating members.

6.3 Migration and Diversification of Income

Like strategies of earning livelihood change over space as they change over time, they also have to be newly adapted to the transforming economic situation in Kyrgyzstan. Within the Sustainable Livelihood approach it is tried to reflect the diversity and complexity of ways in which people from Sai and Boz Adyr make their living. It reveals that most rural households rely on multiple income sources and adopt a range of livelihood strategies, such as labour migration.

In the southern rural province of Batken smallholder subsistence agriculture is the main source of livelihood, being valid for the two studied villages too, especially since the political independence of the country. By the UNDP (2001, 60) it is calculated that in average 50.6 % of the population of the province are working in the agricultural sector, 6.8% in the industry and 3.7 in the third sector. Similar distribution can be observed in the two villages, whereby the more rural and remote character of Sai emerges. In Sai 59% and in Boz Adyr 42% of the villagers at the working age have a job at the sector of agriculture. In both villages only 4% of the population are working in the industrial sector and 18% of the villagers in Sai, respectively 31% in Boz Adyr, work in the third sector, whereby housewives are included.

"While livelihood strategies are diverse and multiple, for many poor people, migration represents a central component of these" (Kothari 2003, 607).

Currently, there is no doubt, that the people of the two villages view international labour migration as a new way of earning livelihood. As shown in the chapter 3.4 international labour migration is not only becoming widespread in Kyrgyzstan, but also it is becoming a preferred livelihood option especially among young male adults in recent years in the two villages. In the time period 2003 - 2004, in Sai 21% and in Boz Adyr 28% of the working population left the village for labour migration, whereby for both villages an increasing tendency must be assumed. Some of the impacts of migration have become visible in the chapters above on all levels of the setting, especially with a focus on the household level.

On the household level a common manifestation of the strategy of livelihood diversification is "straddling" whereby different members of the household live and work in different places, temporarily (e.g. seasonal migration) or permanently (DFID, 2.5). While diversification may be taken overall to mean multiple and multiplying income sources, Ellis (2000, 15) argues, that diversification is more often invoked in the rural development context to imply diversification away from farming as the predominant or primary means of rural survival. As can be seen in Table 11, the studies conducted in this work support this thesis if relative figures are looked at. Thus the biggest part of migrants has been working in the first sector before departure. But as soon as the distribution between the different sectors and the share of people taking the decision of migration is considered, it becomes visible that an even bigger share of the people who used to work at the third sector before departure are willing to migrate (compare chapter 5.1.2). The diversification of agriculture itself, or on-farm diversification, is also a dimension of importance in rural development policy, but is not explored in this study.

Table 11: Sources of Income in Sai and Boz Adyr in %

Sector	Sai				Boz Adyr			
	Men's job (Absolute 408)	Women's job (Absolute 374)	Total (Absolute 782)	Migrated share of total (Absolute 68)	Men's job (Absolute 451)	Women's job (Absolute 439)	Total (Absolute 890)	Migrated share of total (Absolute 109)
1 sector	**29.4**	**29.4**	**29.4**	**17.8**	**24.6**	**24.1**	**24.4**	**25.8**
agriculture for selling and subsistence	27.9	29.4	28.6	18.3	24.6	24.1	24.4	25.8
Pasture	1.5	-	0.8	0.0	-	-	-	-
2 sector	**3.2**	**0.3**	**1.8**	**14.3**	**4.2**	**1.1**	**2.7**	**33.3**
manufacturer (construction, carpenter etc.)	2.9	-	1.5	8.3	4.2	-	2.1	42.1
factory, industry	0.2	0.3	0.3	50.0	-	-	-	-
Artisan	-	-	-	-	-	1.1	0.6	0.0
3 sector	**10.3**	**9.9**	**10.1**	**27.8**	**14.2**	**17.8**	**16.0**	**16.2**
office job (insurance, bank, NGO etc.)	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.7	16.7
public authorities (e.g.*aiyl ökmötü*)	2.0	0.5	1.3	10.0	2.7	1.8	2.2	10.0
health care (nurse, doctor etc.)	-	-	-	-	0.7	0.9	0.8	14.3
trade or other private business	0.2	1.1	0.6	20.0	1.8	3.2	2.5	18.2
Teacher	2.2	3.2	2.7	28.6	3.1	2.7	2.9	23.1
Driver	3.7	-	1.9	40.0	2.9	0.2	1.6	35.7
military service	1.2	-	0.6	60.0	0.7	0.2	0.4	75.0
waterman	0.5	-	0.3	50.0	1.6	-	0.8	14.3
others (*moldo*, film maker, cook, etc)	0.2	0.3	0.3	100.0	0.2	-	0.1	0.0
housewife	-	4.5	2.2	11.8	-	8.0	3.9	0.0
migrant	**15.2**	**1.6**	**8.7**	**0.0**	**22.2**	**2.1**	**12.2**	**0.0**
pension	**9.6**	**11.5**	**10.5**	**0.0**	**3.8**	**6.4**	**5.1**	**0.0**
no income (in education, children)	**47.5**	**48.9**	**48.2**	**15**	**53.2**	**50.6**	**51.9**	**24.4**

Source: Rohner, 2004.

Table 12: Diversification of Income in Sai and Boz Adyr

Number of income sources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	average
Boz Adyr (152)	9	46	50	35	10	1	1	3.0
%	6	30	33	23	7	1	1	
Sai (123)	1	18	35	48	16	2	3	3.6
%	1	15	28	39	13	2	2	

Source: Rohner, 2004.

Livelihood portfolios are analysed in terms of the sources of the households' cash income in the study area. The respondents were asked about their sources of cash income (see Table 12). The results indicate that only 1% of the households of Sai and 6% in Boz Adyr rely on a single kind of cash income, while 50% in Boz Adyr have three sources, and 48% percent of households in Sai have four sources of income. Seven income sources per household were the maximum in both villages. The importance of each source compared to the total income of a household was studied too and can be seen in Table 13.

> *"It may be objected that equating the income composition of the household with its livelihood portfolio is to oversimplify the complexity of social and economic dimensions that are involved in a livelihood. However, this is not the intention. (…) a particular composition of activities and associated income flows represent the main, visible, outcome of the process by which a livelihood is constructed. Summarising this in income terms merely brings livelihood diversity into sharper focus; it is not meant to suggest that the underlying social processes are made to disappear or are regarded as unimportant for policy purposes" (Ellis 2000, 15).*

As an example for a social process, which helps diversifying the household income, will be mentioned the life-cycle celebrations, the so-called *tois*. Since these activities help villagers increase their social capital by developing strong household networks, they are an important part of a household's survival strategy. In the post-soviet period, as Werner (1997, 7) detected in Central Asia, those who can afford to exchange gifts seem to be faring better than others. For example, as it could be seen in the villages Sai and Boz Adyr, networks in relation with migration provide easier access to borrow cash for financing migration or to information about migration.

Income in rural households varies from year to year depending on the outcome of farm production and the prices obtained for output sales (Ellis 1998, 9). Income varies also seasonally, causing practical difficulties for the timing of sample surveys. Accuracy of recall of crop sales and prices or of remittances could not be demanded from informants. Informants were able to give only relative answers concerning income.

Table 13: Main Income Sources in the Villages Sai and Boz Adyr

	Sai		Boz Adyr	
	Main income source by all households	All mentioned income sources	Main income source by all households	All mentioned income sources
1. Sector (total)	80	229	80	189
agriculture for selling and subsistence	36	98	59	95
agriculture for subsistence	4	20	14	47
paid agricultural labour	-	-	-	1
livestock	5	15	6	12
orchard	34	93	1	34
pasture	1	3	-	-
2. Sector (total)	2	8	12	21
manufacturer (construction, carpenter etc.)	2	7	10	16
factory, industry	-	1	-	-
artisan	-	-	2	5
3. Sector (total)	10	48	26	91
office job (insurance, private bank, GDC consultant, NGO etc.)	-	1	-	5
public authorities (e.g.*aiyl ökmötü*)	1	12	7	23
health care (nurse, doctor etc.)	-	-	2	6
trade or other private business	3	4	6	17
teacher	4	18	5	16
driver	2	9	4	13
military service	-	-	-	1
waterman	-	3	-	6
others (*moldo*, film maker, cook, etc.)	-	1	2	4
remittances from migration	6	30	16	53
allowance for children	4	73	5	72
pension (disable, invalid or retired person)	12	55	16	39
no answer	11	1	8	-
Total of incomes mentioned*	125	Average 3.6	163	Average 3.0

* In Sai 2 households mentioned 2 main income sources and in Boz Adyr 11 income sources

Source: Rohner, 2004.

80 households in both villages mentioned agriculture as their main income, whereby 34 households in Sai mentioned income from orchards as their main income. In Boz Adyr can be found compared to Sai a higher number of main incomes in the second (Sai 2/ Boz Adyr 10) and third sector (Sai 10/ Boz Adyr 26) as well as a higher diversification of incomes. This can be explained with the better-off as more accessible location of the village Boz Adyr, due to its location at the main highway, which can be seen as positive competing physical capital for Boz Adyr.

Associated with foreign labour migration is the expectation of increased income and accumulation of livelihood assets. There is no doubt that non-farm income contributes a large proportion of household income in the two villages while remittances constitute an important element in that component of households' income. Astonishingly, only six times were remittances from migration accounted to be the main income in Sai and 16 times in Boz Adyr. This low awareness of remittances is probably due to the timing of the survey, because labour migrants just started their trip and did not yet send remittances.

It should not be forgotten that remittances itself are an indication of income diversification and has the potential to help further diversification of income through establishment of businesses and other initiatives on the part of return migrants or of the member staying put of the migrant's household. For example, increased source of income has provided the opportunity for further investment such as fertilizer for dairy farming or busses to bring people to the markets for selling their goods. Multiplier effects of remittances have contributed to further diversification in source of income.

6.4 Future Development of Labour Migration in Sai and Boz Adyr

Until now, effects of migration can be observed only on a household level and cannot solve the major problems of the village.

> *"There is still the problem of lacking water. In Boz Adyr more than 200 hectares of land can't be used" (aiyl bashy, Boz Adyr, 2004).*

Informants felt left alone by the government. They expressed that remittances from migration never should become the main income source of the village. Rather the government should provide job opportunities and create new working places within Batken or near surrounding. Others thought the solution would be to boost the industry on a state level. They questioned the absence of the state when they rebuilt the drinking water supply. Why did the state react so late to the border conflicts?

On the other hand they are well aware that remittances increase a household's well-being. A woman from Sai remarked:

> *"My husband goes to earn money in Russia to build a house. Still migration does not have a future. In 10 years they cannot migrate anymore. They have to take the opportunity now. Nevertheless, I hope that migration is going on and Russia will bring brightness to our life also in future" (mother, Sai, 2004).*

The view of the situation of migration for the future is estimated rather negative by a returnee:

"Next year there will still be more and more people from Boz Adyr going to Russia. But already now the penalties are getting higher if they get caught by the police" (Asilbek, Boz Adyr, 2004).

The tendency of controls of documents is increasing in Russia (compare chapter 3.4). Boyd (1989, 648) wrote that

"existing migration laws in the receiving country can take influence on the potential migrant as an inhibiting factor".

Therefore solutions such as contracts between Russia and Kyrgyzstan are demanded from the villagers:

"Russia and Kyrgyzstan should work together, like it happened during the Soviet time" (father, Sai, 2004).

Regarding the oscillation of migration flow in the villages (Figure 11 and Figure 12) a fast increasing trend can be observed. Because there are just a few alternative income opportunities to the main income from agriculture, migration is seen as an income diversification strategy. As a result of this study it can be assumed that this trend will increase rapidly also in future.

6.5 Summary of the Impacts of Labour Migration

Migration is one of the livelihood strategies in the diversification portfolio of the households from Sai and Boz Adyr. But still, smallholder agriculture represents the highest activity in this rural area of Batken. In Sai 59% and in Boz Adyr 42% of the villagers at the working age are working in the fields. It is important to see the strategy of migration interacting with diverse adapted strategies of a household. This diversification reduces the risk of migration but also makes it possible. Furthermore, for households of the study area it is especially important to generate remittance income, which exhibits the key attribute that it is not correlated with either seasonal cycles or risk factors in agriculture (Ellis 2000, 71).

Impact of remittances on villages' income distribution is multi-faceted and complex. Thereby remittances, being a measurable result of the exchange between migrants and their families in the region of origin, are regarded to be the most important element of exchange (Root and de Jong 1991, 232; Regmi and Tisdell 2002, 76). Two different mechanisms to transfer remittances from Russia to the village of origin do exist – a save but rather expensive transfer by bank or a costless but risky transfer carrying money back home by hand. Decisions where to invest remittances are taken in extended families mostly by the head of the family and in nuclear families, the wife staying put can decide what is urgently needed, or if possible, waits with spending the money until the migrant worker returns home.

The investments of remittances can be distinguished in short- and long-term priorities – first of all it is invested in paying back loans, secondly in daily goods, in education, in house, livestock, or small business, in goods from Russia or in life-cycle celebrations. Since migration as livelihood strategy is adapted in the villages Sai and Boz Adyr noticeably more life-cycle celebrations, reaffirmed through person-centred informal net-

works, are held and help to facilitate the process of migration. This network lowers risks and costs of migration to not expose migrants to vulnerability. But still, for migrants from Sai and Boz Adyr it remains high, because of living illegally in Russia, mostly without working permission and thus without protection against exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, migrant families' human capital becomes weakened because bad living conditions, poor hygiene and dangerous work in Russia increase vulnerability to illness and accidents.
In contrast to the amount of remittances, many components of the impact of remittances may not be quantifiable, like the creation of social capital or social networks or the repercussions of eventual additional working loads on a household respectively people remaining behind, because of the loss of working-power. Estimates of the migrants' net contributions to the household incomes need to take into account the full opportunity costs of migration. Because in the villages job opportunities are rare and the land plots very small, household members staying put mentioned that it was better if a person of the household worked abroad. This is leading to the assumption that opportunity costs of migration are much smaller than the expected benefits obtained by it.

Regarding the settings on a village level not many changes are recognisable since people have been migrating and remittances hardly affected the distribution of income via a trickle-down effect (Stark 1991, 282). Nevertheless, changes are recognisable individually on household level, but no collective investments e.g. in village infrastructure, have been undertaken. To this day, impacts on remittances do not exceed the range of the household.

Image 3: Migrants and their Families and their Livelihoods

Sai

Jailoo, Suu Bashy

Sai

Sai

Pulling out weeds, Sai

Weaving carpets, Boz Adyr

Old Soviet tractor, Boz Adyr

Drying apricots, Boz Adyr

Grain mill, Boz Adyr

Source: Rohner, 2004.

7 Conclusion

The Kyrgyz people are nomadic by tradition and therefore labour mobility has always been high in Kyrgyzstan. Even during the Soviet period, the authorities only managed to restrict internal migration flows by a strict system of residence registration (*propiska*) and internal passports, but they never succeeded in stopping it (Buckley 1995, 896). Kyrgyzstan, which was under Soviet rule for more than 70 years, declared its independence on 31st August 1991. During the early years of transition, the break-down of industry and trade, and the collapse of the collective farm system and rural infrastructure that followed the disintegration of the Soviet Union led to large ethnic migration flows – both internal and external (World Bank 2003, 69).

This study provides a detailed description and analysis of the patterns and impacts of labour migration in the two villages of Sai and Boz Adyr and discusses whether labour migration can be understood as a means of securing a sustainable livelihood strategy, reducing households' vulnerability. With the help of the sustainable livelihood approach and the insight of migration theories, which explain the reasons for initiating and perpetuating migration, the study sketches out the livelihood strategy of migration. The sustainable livelihood approach corresponds well to structured migration streams, how their movements are determined, how households deal with the impact of migration and how they cope with the strategy of migration. The study draws on narratives and the household survey of migrant workers and also members of their households who remained in the villages of Sai and Boz Adyr in 2004.

Analysis of the narratives and household survey showed that 38% of the households in Sai and 57% in Boz Adyr secure their livelihoods through a strategy of migration. The villagers head to the bigger cities in Kyrgyzstan or leave for Russia, while a few also go to Kazakhstan – and this reflects national patterns of migration. England and Korea are also increasing in importance as destinations, although not amongst the villagers interviewed in the case study.

During the Soviet era, the two villages of Sai and Boz Adyr were parts of a *sovkhoz* with vast pasturelands and cattle-breeding farms. Today, agriculture on irrigated land and cattle breeding still form the main income of the households in both villages; cash crops and orchards are cultivated as well. 59% of all villagers at the working age in Sai – and 42% in Boz Adyr – work in the fields. Irrigated land and water, which are seen as *the natural capital* of a household, are scarce and this constitutes an important motive for migration, although no correlation could be detected. Nonetheless, in late spring, when the work in the fields is done and the weather permits work to begin on construction sites in Russia, which is the sector where most migrants are employed, the number of migrants abroad reaches its peak. After the summer season most migrants come back to the villages for the harvest.

The human capital – household size, age and gender structure, stage of the life-cycle and educational level – has a great influence on a person's motivation, intention and ability to migrate. More than 90% of all migrants were young men of working age,

most of them with no or very low income, and without employment perspectives back home. It was expected that there would be higher migration rates amongst villagers who had attended higher education, but this could not be declared significant for either of the study sites. The dynamics of intra-household relations influence (and are influenced by) migration and "staying put", and they are related to the way the household is organised. The labour force within the household, as well as number and age of children or older people requiring care, are factors which influence the decision to migrate. Therefore, especially in extended households, migration can be seen as a supplementary livelihood strategy.

For some young men, the motivation to migrate comes from a desire to be accepted within their peer group, to demonstrate independence from their parents, to explore other countries or to fulfil their wishes and dreams. Dreams of a house, a car, livestock or a nice bride, or holding another life-cycle celebration stimulate the decision to migrate. Households act as income-pooling units in which members take migration decisions collectively, even though the final decision is made by the person volunteering to migrate or by the head of the household himself.

Social stratification is a crucial dimension of migration. Examination of the *financial capital* of households shows that the richest and poorest in the villages migrate less than the middle class. Lack of initial capital and exclusion from migrant networks due to an inadequate socio-economic status form insurmountable obstacles to migration.

Migration is rarely *institutionalised* formally in Kyrgyzstan, even less so in the rural villages of the province of Batken. Thus villagers in Sai and Boz Adyr have taken the law into their own hands and helped organise migration for other villagers in order to reduce both the costs and the risks. Networks - *the social capital* of households - clearly influence the pattern and extent of migration in the initial phase. Village-wide networks have played an important role in providing initial and subsequent access to the process of migration and to jobs in various places. Few migrants were able to develop their own informal networks and are still in contact with their former employers in Russia. Contact to the family and the village, as well as to the area of migration, turned out to be important for extending their social capital, for reducing the costs and risks of migration and for increasing expected net returns (Massey et al. 1993, 448).

The quantitatively tangible remittances - *the outcome* of migration - are the most desired and expected result of exchange between migrants and their families back in the region of origin. Remittances from Russia to the villages of Sai and Boz Adyr are either transferred safely through a bank at a high cost or carried at a certain risk in the migrant's pockets. A migrant worker usually makes between one and four transfers per season of amounts that range between 50 and 500 USD[1]. Decisions on how to invest the remittances are taken by the head of the family or by the wife who remains behind in the village, or else it was discussed with the household before the migrant left. Remittances are invested in short- and long-term priorities. First of all, loans have to be repaid; afterwards remittances are invested in daily goods, education, housing, livestock, small business, in goods the migrant brings back from Russia or in life-cycle

[1] The average wage in Kyrgyzstan in the year 2002 was 36 USD/month (UN 2003, 56).

celebrations. Life-cycle celebrations and rituals are pivotal encounters that help people cultivate, maintain, and expand networks (Kuehnast and Dudwick 2004, 4); they are not quantifiable as an impact or a result of migration. Since migration has been adopted as a livelihood strategy in the villages of Sai and Boz Adyr, there are significantly more life-cycle celebrations being held, and this in turn facilitates the migration process and lowers both the risks of exposure to vulnerability and migration costs. Migrants are vulnerable due to their illegal status, as well as the poor living conditions and dangerous work in Russia.
At village level, in contrast to the household or individual level, not many changes are visible since people have started migrating. Remittances have hardly affected the distribution of income via a trickle-down effect (Stark 1991, 282) and no collective investments e.g. in village infrastructure, have been undertaken.

Migration is one of the livelihood strategies in the diversification portfolio of the households in Sai and Boz Adyr. It is important to see how the strategy of migration interacts with the various strategies adopted by a household. This diversification reduces the risks involved in migration, but also makes migration possible in the first place. Furthermore, it is especially important for households within the study area to generate income that is not dependent on their main activity of agriculture. Income diversification by means of remittances helps reduce households' vulnerability (Ellis 2000, 71).

Since the socio-economic and political situation in Kyrgyzstan is unlikely to change in the near future, migration will remain a promising livelihood strategy, especially for rural households. To increase the return of migration, it would be important to reduce its social and economic costs. Therefore the promotion of a comprehensive information policy would provide transparency about the process of migration, lead to more successful migration and reduce migrants' vulnerability.
A further project of some interest would be to organise long-term research into how significant migration will become compared to households' other livelihood strategies.
Kyrgyzstan, which is economically and politically still in a process of transition, has not yet been able institutionalise the new and ever more frequent strategy of labour migration. Therefore, as migration becomes more systematic and social networks become better developed, it would be interesting to trace if migration will also spread to other destination countries. And is labour migration capable of changing the social and economic situation of a village on a greater scale than it does at present?
In a predominantly rural area like Batken province, where irrigated agriculture is the region's mainstay, securing the livelihoods of all households is a difficult challenge due to demographic growth and limited land and water. Therefore, another question to be explored is whether the strategy of migration will alleviate the pressure on disputed natural resources (water and land) in the future or, on the contrary, whether it will foster new conflicts.

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